Commentary

Volume Seventy-nine, Number One, January 1985

Delusions of Soviet Weakness
EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

Vistas of Annihilation
ROBERT ALTER

What Good Is Freedom of Speech?
IRVING YOUNGER

Reflections on a Memoir
JACOB SLOAN

MOVIES:
Treason Chic
RICHARD GRENIER

Why the Democrats Lost
JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

Election '84

Conservatism After Reagan
GREGORY A. FOSSEDAL

BOOKS:
Brigitte Berger / Lionel Kochan / Bernard D. Davis / Melville J. Ulmer / Henrik Bering-Jensen / James Nuechterlein

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE / $3.25

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"AT&T PRESENTS CARNEGIE HALL TONIGHT"

Juilliard String Quartet

This week and every week you can enjoy the excellence of Carnegie Hall on your radio.

In "AT&T Presents Carnegie Hall Tonight," some of the greatest soloists, ensembles, and orchestras of our time perform for you. Hosted by actor and composer John Rubinstein, this program hour also includes feature interviews, so you actually hear more than you would at a live performance.

This series is part of AT&T's continuing commitment to bring you great art and great artists.

AT&T

©AT&T 1984 Check local listings for the time and station in your area.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 79 NUMBER ONE *JANUARY 1985*

Articles

15 Why the Democrats Lost *Joshua Muravchik*

27 Conservatism After Reagan *Gregory A. Fossedal*

32 Delusions of Soviet Weakness *Edward N. Luttwak*

39 Vistas of Annihilation *Robert Alter*

45 What Good Is Freedom of Speech? *Irving Younger*

52 Reflections on a Memoir *Jacob Sloan*

Movies

61 Treason Chic *Richard Grenier*

Letters

2 from *Tom J. Farer, David Isenberg, Max Singer, Mark Falcoff, Abba Eban, Martin Sieff, Catherine Young, Michael Levin, Peter Collier & David Horowitz, Paul Johnson, Murray Friedman, Jonathan D. Sarna,* and others

Books in Review

66 Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980, by Charles Murray *Brigitte Berger*

70 Ilya Ehrenburg, by Anatol Goldberg *Lionel Kochan*

71 Not in Our Genes, by Richard C. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon J. Kamin *Bernard D. Davis*

73 Staying on Top: The Business Case for a National Industrial Strategy, by Kevin P. Phillips *Melville J. Ulmer*

75 In Love and War, by James and Sybil Stockdale *Henrik Bering-Jensen*

78 The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America, by Richard John Neuhaus *James Nuechterlein*

Editor: Norman Podhoretz

Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy

Managing Editor: Marion Magid

Associate Editor: Brenda Brown

Contributing Editors: Robert Alter, Milton Himmelfarb, Walter Laqueur

Comptroller: Philip Shamis

Production Manager: Bruce Lodi

Circulation Manager: Helene Hansen

Cover: The Sheldon Group, Inc.

COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $3.25, $33 a year; 3 years $89; 5 years $132—Add $5.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Copyright © 1985 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Howard I. Friedman, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee

Donald M. Blinken, *Chairman*

Morris B. Abram
Norman E. Alexander
Theodore Ellenoff
Edward E. Elson
Stephen Friedman
Lawrence Goldmuntz
Mark Goodson
Robert H. Haines
Lewis J. Laventhol
Bess Myerson
Robert L. Pelz
Ned Pines
Frederick P. Rose
Michael Saperstein
Nanette Scofield
Henry Sherman
John Slawson
Alan M. Stroock*
Laurence A. Tisch

**Honorary Member*

Letters from Readers

Central America

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "How to Understand Central America" [September 1984], Mark Falcoff left the impression, no doubt inadvertently, that I was opposed to power-sharing in Nicaragua ("One dissenting voice in this group is that of Tom J. Farer, who favors power-sharing in El Salvador but not in Nicaragua").

Of course I favor power-sharing in Nicaragua. Nothing in the chapter to which Mr. Falcoff was referring suggested the contrary. The question I was addressing was not whether there should be power-sharing, but whether, on balance, the use of force was a desirable means for achieving it, i.e., whether we should continue to finance, arm, and train one or more of the "contra" groups. I found this question of *means, not ends* a difficult one. I know personally and have great respect for Alfonso Robelo and other leading figures in ARDE. Arturo Cruz, the former Nicaraguan Ambassador to the U.S., who apparently enjoys the respect and confidence of all the contra groups, is another man I know and esteem. Their commitment to social reform and political freedom, their sacrifices on behalf of those values, and their enormous ability to contribute to the reconstruction of Nicaragua after decades of misrule are not subject to dispute. Anyone concerned with the defense and promotion of human rights wants them and like-minded colleagues to participate in governing Nicaragua.

I nevertheless concluded that the U.S. should terminate aid to the contras. Why? On the one hand, I felt that a U.S.-orchestrated threat to the security of the Sandinista government, though it might make that government more malleable on certain issues of *foreign* policy, would probably have the contrary effect with respect to its domestic policies. Indeed, I feared that it would encourage and facilitate the imposition by the present government of a more intensely and comprehensively authoritarian form of rule.

While, on the one hand, the policy seemed likely to prove counterproductive, on the other, it was killing people, not only the peasants and workers and doctors and nurses and others who work for or serve in militias organized by the Nicaraguan government, but also the young men who do the fighting for the contra leadership. Under traditional ethical notions about the use of force, particularly those elaborated by the great Catholic theologians, the use of force cannot be justified if, among other conditions, it is unlikely to achieve its objective.

Moreover, I was not resigned to the view that the end of the contras as a military threat to the Nicaraguan government—the inevitable result, if not immediately, then certainly within a fairly short time, of the withdrawal of all U.S. support—assured the perpetuation of authoritarian government in Nicaragua. It seemed to me not unlikely that if Washington used all of the legitimate, overt instruments of economic suasion and cultural penetration available to it, and particularly if it acted in conjunction with democratic governments in Latin America and Europe, then, given the strong religious inclination and affiliation of many Nicaraguans, given their receptivity to American culture, given the country's dependence on access to American markets, the prospects for the gradual evolution of a more plural political order were not dim.

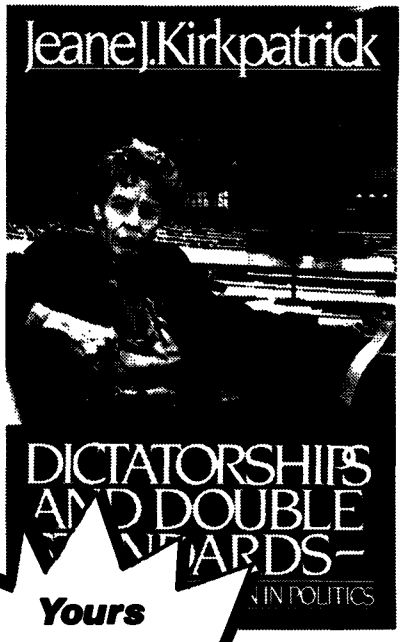
Finally, I explained in some detail why, from the point of view of means, not ends, the cases of El Salvador and Nicaragua were not symmetrical. In El Salvador I was proposing using our leverage to force the government to negotiate power-sharing arrangements with the opposition (that would, after the conditions of a fair electoral process had been established, be submitted for electoral review). We would, in brief, use pressure other than military force to secure power-sharing (which we and others might have to guarantee for a time) *in order to end the butchery*. In Nicaragua we were providing military means which insured the continuation of war and tended, if anything, to make any form of power-sharing less likely.

I am not a seer. These judgments may be wrong. All judgments in the realm of foreign policy are by their nature problematic. Reasonable people may reach different

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When a former aide to Hubert Humphrey writes a book about liberal hypocrisy, that's news. When her book digs deep, down to the very roots of the liberal worldview, that's IMPORTANT

"How can it be," asks Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, "that persons so deeply committed to the liberation of South Vietnam and Cambodia . . . were so little affected by the enslavement that followed their liberation? Why are Western liberals — who often are such smart people — such slow learners about Communism?" Our outspoken UN Ambassador answers this riddle in one of the most searching critiques of liberalism since Burnham's *Suicide of the West.*



Have you been reading about how the liberals still buried in the State Department keep sniping at Ambassador Kirkpatrick? They spread vicious rumors, lose no opportunity to wield the stiletto. They want the lady out of the way.

Small wonder, when she says things like . . .

★ How the liberals consistently help Marxists get power in the Third World. The media's role. ★ Disaster, thy name is Jimmy. A comprehensive review of the wreck Carter left. ★ The difference between Communists and autocrats. Why the U.S. can properly help the latter, but not the former. ★ The Soviets in Cuba: dug in far deeper than most realize. ★ The *real* problem in El Salvador (knee-jerk liberals haven't even scented it). ★ The fatal flaw of every liberal. ★ *Is* there a silent majority of conservatives? ★ How the McGovern reforms infected the *Republican* Party. ★ What happens when a nation turns its back on tradition. ★ The famous essay that caught President-to-be Reagan's eye.

If the feisty UN Ambassador had simply run through the dismal leftist track record, that would make this a valuable book. But she takes us inside the liberal mind. Her warning: It's a wrecking ball, and it's swinging wildly, out of control.

Yours FREE!

Did you ever dream you'd hear our Ambassador to the UN saying the unmentionable?

- "Our times seem especially hospitable to bad ideas, probably because, in throwing off the shackles of tradition, we have left ourselves especially vulnerable to untried nostrums and untested theories."
- "The failure of the Carter administration's foreign policy is now clear to everyone except its architects, and even they must entertain private doubts from time to time about a policy whose crowning achievement was to lay the groundwork for a transfer of the Panama Canal."
- "Assisting 'change' did not lead the Carter administration to undertake the destabilization of a *Communist* country. The principles of self-determination and nonintervention are thus both selectively applied. We accepted the status quo in Communist nations (in the name of 'diversity' and national autonomy), but not in nations ruled by 'right wing' dictators or white oligarchies."

How to get this new $14.95 book FREE

How the Club Works

Every 4 weeks (13 times a year) you get a free copy of the Club Bulletin, which offers you the Featured Selection plus a good choice of Alternates — all of interest to conservatives. ★ If you want the Featured Selection, do nothing. It will come automatically. ★ If you don't want the Featured Selection, or you do want an Alternate, indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it by the deadline date. ★ The majority of Club books will be offered at 20-50% discounts, plus a charge for shipping and handling. ★ As soon as you buy and pay for 3 books at regular Club prices, your membership may be ended at any time, either by you or by the Club. ★ If you ever receive a Featured Selection without having had 10 days to decide if you want it, you may return it at Club expense for full credit. ★ Good service. No computers! ★ The Club will offer regular Superbargains, mostly at 70-90% discounts plus shipping and handling. *Superbargains do NOT count toward fulfilling your Club* obligation, but do enable you to buy fine books at giveaway prices. ★ Only one membership per household.

CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB

15 Oakland Avenue • Harrison, NY 10528

Please accept my membership in the Club and send me, free and postpaid, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick's outspoken new book, ***Dictatorships and Double Standards.*** I agree to buy 3 additional books at regular Club prices over the next 18 months. I also agree to the Club rules spelled out in this coupon.

COM-1

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conclusions. But whatever the merits of my views, I do not think that they can be summed up fairly by the flat statement that I favor "power-sharing in El Salvador but not in Nicaragua." The distortion is sufficiently great that, in fairness to Mr. Falcoff, I think I should recommend a course in remedial reading. Or would one in remedial ethics be more appropriate? . . .

TOM J. FARER
Rutgers School of Law
Camden, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

During the 1980-81 school year at the University of Oregon I had the distinction of attending the course in Hispanic American history taught by Mark Falcoff. He was such a skillful and lucid teacher that I have attentively followed his subsequent work, especially since he has ably demonstrated that he is one of the more articulate defenders of current government policy in Latin America. . . . I write now, however, to criticize his recent article.

First, Mr. Falcoff implies that the reason most Americans "know almost nothing about Central America" is a result, among other things, of "allegation and misinformation." But as a historian he surely must be aware that most Americans don't know anything about *any* foreign-policy issue. No doubt, despite overwhelming coverage over the past four years, most Americans would not be able to tell you how many SS-20's the Soviet Union has deployed in Eastern Europe or, for that matter, how many cruise and Pershing-2 missiles have been deployed in response. Would Mr. Falcoff assert that this ignorance is the result of some hostile conspiracy?

Second, Mr. Falcoff maintains that people get their ideas about Central America from two main sources; reports from commissions and collective studies. While it is pleasant to think that concerned citizens and policy-makers would pay $19.95 to read the 300-odd pages of the Carnegie study or the 132 pages of the Kissinger commission report, for which Mr. Falcoff was a consultant, it is not realistic. I wish it were otherwise, but in real life most people will scan editorials and op-ed pieces, watch the nightly news, and listen to the radio. Legislators will rely on their aides and Congressional Research Service briefs and pay special attention to the letters from those constituents who are concerned enough to write. . . . In the end, the outlines of the debate will be framed by speeches about "losing Central America" instead of by an examination of scholarly studies.

Third, in summarizing the chapter by Richard Feinberg and Robert Pastor in the Carnegie study, Mr. Falcoff indulges in selective quotation. He quotes their statement that the problem of economic development is compounded "by the impact of a global recession on small, open, dependent economies" but leaves out the preceding phrase which they cite as an equally important factor, "the inability of the politico-military institutions to either accept or adapt to the social and economic changes." Unless this point is directly faced, even the most generous economic aid will only serve to perpetuate an armed dictatorship of the Right, to paraphrase Mr. Falcoff.

Fourth, he asserts that the forces of the FMLN-FDR in El Salvador "openly and unashamedly avow a totalitarian ideology." As he no doubt knows, the FMLN is made up of five groups: FAL, FPL, ERP, FARN, and PRTC. According to Robert S. Leiken, the editor of the Carnegie study, only one group, the FAL (Salvadoran Communist party) is firmly in the Soviet camp, and recent events within the FPL (such as the murder of Melida Anaya Montes) have shown that this group is a rather unreliable wedge for Cuban-Soviet penetration. Thus it is a considerable act of faith to claim that these forces have a "deep affinity with the Soviet Union." Such an unproven assertion may satisfy the Reverend Falwell, but it's not worthy of Mr. Falcoff.

Fifth, he cites the $75 million given by the U.S. to Nicaragua as proof that the U.S. was not hostile to the Sandinista government. But in *The Politics of Intervention: The United States in Central America,* David Landes and Patricia Flynn note that: "A minimum of 60 percent of this amount was programmed to provide foreign exchange to private-sector enterprises, a deliberate effort to slight the state-owned enterprises created when the Sandinistas confiscated all businesses owned by Somoza and his associates." . . .

Finally, Mr. Falcoff states that we should not foreclose the "use of military force." He also writes that "we should be clear about what we are seeking, what outcomes are most probable, and what their human, political, and strategic costs will be." Bearing this in mind, perhaps he would be kind enough to inform us how many U.S. troops we should be prepared to sacrifice in order to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, as the Reagan administration is bent on doing? Does he believe the 2,000 to 5,000 dead and 9,000 to 10,000 wounded (estimated by Theodore Moran in the Carnegie study) is a worthwhile sacrifice to make?

DAVID ISENBERG
Metuchen, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While many of Mark Falcoff's conclusions in "How to Understand Central America" are sound, the article contains too many errors to justify its title.

Mr. Falcoff makes two significant mistakes about Nicaragua. First, he describes the FDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Force), usually referred to as the "CIA-supported contras," as "officered by former Guardsmen." Second, he says that "It is entirely possible that . . . the Sandinistas would win [genuinely free] elections."

Although the FDN was created and originally run by former Guard officers, it was subsequently taken over by civilian political leaders who had opposed Somoza. By the beginning of this year a series of "purges" had removed virtually all objectionable former Guard officers from power in the FDN. Now there are as many, or more, Somocistas involved with Edén Pastora and with the Sandinistas (FSLN) as there are with the FDN. Pastora, the former military commander of ARDE, publicly accuses the FDN of being Somocista but privately tells people that he knows the accusation is no longer fair, and that he continues to make it for "tactical" reasons.

Not only could the Sandinistas not win a free election, there is little reason to think that they could get as much as 40 percent of the vote; 20-30 percent is probably a better estimate. *La Nacion* of Costa Rica reported a secret poll of 450 Nicaraguans taken in May in which 22 percent said they would vote for the FSLN, 67 percent said they would vote against the government, and 11 percent ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pressed no preference. The facts supporting this judgment, which have been true for some time, have recently been given liberal blessing in Robert S. Leiken's article in the *New Republic* (October 8, 1984).

Besides the testimony of Nicaraguans and observers, let me cite the following reasons the Sandinistas do not have much support: (1) living standards have been drastically reduced; (2) food and other formerly plentiful items are rationed; (3) all farmers are required to sell all their crops to the government at low prices; (4) there is a new military draft; (5) thousands of foreigners have been brought in to help run the country; (6) the leaders live in ostentatious luxury; (7) there is extensive corruption; (8) the government has been attacking the Church and its popular leader, Archbishop Obando y Bravo; (9) Sandinista block committees and mass organizations force people to participate in political rallies and demonstrations; (10) many people have been killed or arrested or tortured by government security agencies. . . .

Mr. Falcoff's description of the origins of the conflict in El Salvador also contains significant factual errors. Partly as a result, his summary of the situation is not quite correct, although much of it is the view expressed in a good deal of the writing on the subject. (In some places in his article it isn't clear whether Mr. Falcoff is giving his own view or reporting the views of others.)

The undeniable factual error is that Mr. Falcoff says the first revolutionary governing junta, which ruled El Salvador for two-and-one-half months at the end of 1979, decreed drastic land, banking, and other reforms. In fact, these reforms were not instituted by the first junta; they came into being only in 1980, after the army had brought in the Christian Democratic party (PDC) to replace the first junta.

More broadly, Mr. Falcoff misdescribes—as do most experts—the political situation in both the army and in El Salvador's political community on the Left. Part of the problem comes from the difficulty of understanding the political attitudes within the Salvadoran officer corps—unfamiliar and unpleasant terrain for most political analysts—and part is confusion caused by the shifting meanings of the familiar terms "Left" and "Right."

The standard mistake about the army is to say that "younger officers" deposed the old regime of General Carlos Humberto Romero, but that shortly thereafter control of the army shifted to "conservative" officers, or that the army was fundamentally divided between a faction that favored reforms and another faction that wanted to restore the right wing to power.

The facts are more complicated, and lead in a somewhat different direction. First, one must distinguish between two different groups who might claim to be the famous "younger officers." One group is the officers who planned and carried out the coup that ousted dictator Romero. The other group is the losing faction in the debate that went on in the army for over a year thereafter. There is only a partial overlap between these two groups.

The officers who planned the coup were led by Colonel (now General) Jaime Abdul Gutierrez (then age forty-three), who continued as the principal army participant in the revolutionary governing junta until 1982. . . . Gutierrez's policy views are far from conservative; he is a committed democrat with social and political views in some ways more reformist than José Napoléon Duarte's and most of the Christian Democratic party's, although he believes in the institution of private property—as do most Salvadoran workers and peasants. Specifically, Colonel Gutierrez was determined from the start to initiate a major land-reform program, to break the power of the oligarchs, to nationalize the banks, to clean up the security forces, and to establish a government of law based on free elections.

In the debate within the officer corps, the leader of the opposition, Colonel Majano, and the younger officers he represented, took more radical positions. But Gutierrez's side was also radical—by the standards either of El Salvador in 1979 or of the United States. Two-thirds of all officers over the rank of major had been removed from the active army after the coup, and this meant that most of the very conservative and most corrupt officers did not participate in the subsequent debates within the army.

In the vote within the officer corps at the end of 1980 that decided the dispute and removed Majano from the junta, the fairly narrow policy differences between the two groups were not the critical factor. Majano was overwhelmingly defeated because most officers had more respect for and confidence in Colonel Gutierrez and his principal allies, like Colonel Garcia, the Defense Minister. They also felt that Majano was improperly trying to use allies from outside the army to influence the decision. Thus the widespread use of the label "right wing" or "conservative" to describe the winning faction in the army debate is misleading.

Perhaps the main source for the idea that the army turned sharply to the Right soon after General Romero was deposed comes from a misinterpretation of events in the days immediately following the army's revolutionary proclamation. Several guerrilla and "popular force" groups tried to seize power by force (although they were already represented in the cabinet) and they were put down by the security forces. In the view of many, since the army did not support the "popular forces," it could not really be considered reformist. . . . (Incidentally, it is a reasonable bet that if the Salvadoran "popular forces" had been allowed to seize power they would have done exactly what the Sandinistas did in Nicaragua.)

Even after the Majano defeat and the departure of a few of the younger officers, the officer corps was essentially united on the following key propositions: (1) the old-regime partnership between the army and the oligarchy had been bad; (2) substantial land and other reforms were necessary to get popular support, and most officers thought these were also just and desirable; (3) future governments should be chosen by free elections; (4) the army should leave most politics to the civilians, and concentrate on running the army; (5) unity of the army was essential. . . .

Almost all the officers are pleased with their decision to support land reform, because they believe that this is the reason the majority of the people turned against the guerrillas and began supporting the army. They very much enjoy the respect they now receive, in contrast to the hostile feelings they had to face in previous years. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people's appreciation of and respect for the army's role in supporting and physically defending three free elections are also important to the officers, who see how much genuine elections mean to the people.

The army consensus against participation in politics is defined with some complexity. It did not exclude the use of influence to assure that there was a government available to prosecute the war after the 1982 elections. When the Constituent Assembly seemed unable to choose a President, the army pressured it to make a choice and showed a preference for Alvaro Magaña, who was regarded in El Salvador as more liberal than the majority of the Assembly. . . .

Now, as to Mr. Falcoff's discussion of the "death squads": the army, or at least a part of it, is generally thought to bear much of the responsibility for the "death squads," which are said to have killed tens of thousands of Salvadoran civilians. Mr. Falcoff associates the "death squads" with counterrevolutionary efforts of the extreme Right to regain power from the "centrist" government and/or to defeat its reforms. Some of this is clearly correct, but it also includes decisive confusions.

There are the right-wing death squads that, with army involvement, have killed many people for their extreme political purposes. The group that killed the labor leaders Mike Hammer, Mark Perlman, and Rudolfo Viera in the Sheraton lobby is a good example. Similar death squads have killed hundreds of peasant and union leaders in the last five years (most ly before 1983). Altogether, tens of thousands of Salvadorans have been killed since the current war began four years ago.

But the great majority of the Salvadorans who have been killed in this war have not been killed because of the efforts of the right wing to regain power or because of landowner resistance to reforms. . . . Most of the killings have been in connection with the war between the guerrillas and the reformist governments. That is, people have been killed because of the war between the extreme Left on the one side and the moderate Left, Center, and moderate Right on the other. (The extreme Right, through its attacks on the government and its supporters, helps the extreme Left, although that is obviously not its purpose.)

In this war there is little doubt that the government has killed more people than the other side, and that many of the people killed by the government were not guerrillas or culpable (although those who did the killing thought their actions were a part of the fight against the guerrillas). These are the bulk of the so-called "death-squad" murders, and there is no justification for them. In most cases there has been army involvement, and sometimes atrocities were committed by soldiers acting under the orders of officers.

But do army atrocities prove that the army is right-wing? No. Unfortunately, experience shows that atrocities against peasants can come from any side. In this war the people have demonstrated in three elections that they prefer the government to the guerrillas by three or four to one. Although it is true that the country is farther to the Right than the guerrillas, it is misleading to describe "death-squad" actions intended as part of the war of the majority against the guerrillas as "killings by the Right." . . . Since the policy of the government has been more Left than Right, it would be more correct to describe killings by the government side as killings by the Left against the extreme Left.

The fact that most of the army atrocities have been committed in defense of a reformist government, and in connection with a war in which the army is supported by the great majority of the people, does not justify the army's behavior. Much that the army has done is both immoral and foolish, and no American should support or condone it. . . .

But some officers have also clearly been involved in real right-wing political killings (not just "misguided" efforts to defeat the guerrillas), and the army has not punished these officers, although people assume it must know who they are. Many people therefore conclude that the army really favors such extreme right-wing behavior. This would be perfectly logical if the only actions of the army were its failure to act against officers involved with extreme right-wing death squads. But, as noted above, the army does other things, like strongly supporting land reforms and free elections since 1979. So perhaps there is another reason for the army's failure to clean its own house. But to offer such an explanation does not mean one condones the conduct of the "death squads," some of which has been so horrible that it might almost seem an affront to say "it may not mean exactly what you think." . . .

Some of the officers still in the army agree with Roberto D'Aubuisson's right-wing political ideas (although not nearly as many as those who agree with his ideas about how to fight the guerrillas). But these officers have time and again rejected D'Aubuisson's efforts to get them to act against the army leadership. These conservative officers believe more strongly in their commitment to army unity than in their conservative political views. . . . "Unity of the force" is the consideration that decides most difficult questions for most officers.

As for the civilian Left, Mr. Falcoff says that when the first junta left the government at the end of 1979 the "social-democratic component" went with the guerrillas. While it is true that Guillermo Ungo, who was a member of the first junta and now heads the political front for the guerrillas, is indeed the leader of a social-democratic party, all the implications of Mr. Falcoff's statement are misleading.

Ungo's party had always been very small. Before 1979 the Left in El Salvador was composed primarily of the PDC, whose policy orientation had always been a Third World version of European social democracy, and a shifting set of extreme Left groups. Since Ungo's tiny party stood in the middle, he became the "neutral" chairman of the Popular Forum of the Left. The guerrillas are now supported by Ungo, by a small fraction of the PDC, and by the extreme Left groups. All of these together represent perhaps a quarter or a third of the political Left, and a much smaller fraction of the voters. Before 1980 the extreme Left groups could get large crowds, but their popular support vanished when the government instituted reforms. The extreme Left then made an alliance with Castro and others and began the current war.

A more complicated and factual look at events in El Salvador makes one aware of how misleading labels like "Left," "moderate," and "Right" can be in a distant and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A new magazine— now celebrating its fiftieth birthday

In 1934 Mordecai M. Kaplan, the leading Jewish theologian of the twentieth century, founded the *Reconstructionist*. Over the years this unusual, novel magazine has followed Kaplan's lead by fearlessly confronting, as they arise, major new concerns of thinking Jews throughout the English-speaking world.

Jacob Staub, the current editor, has kept this tradition of newness vibrantly alive in every issue. Article after article addresses subjects that lie at the core of modern Jewry's questions about itself today and its role and place in the world of tomorrow:

- *The Problem of Jewish Self-Definition*
- *Intermarriage: Symbol, Symptom, and Distraction*
- *Jewish Identity and Patrilineal Descent*
- *Dogma in Judaism*
- *The Growth of Political Violence in Israel*
- *Women in the Rabbinate*
- *The Thanksgiving Dilemma*
- *Jewish Responses to Genetic Research*

These are only a few of the significant topics dealt with in the past six months. Future issues will put forth other intellectual challenges—all aimed at a continuing renewal of Jewish self-awareness and self-understanding. Thus, as the *Reconstructionist* was in 1934 so it is today—a new publication. And so it has been, new and fresh, in every issue for the past fifty years.

SUBSCRIBE NOW! If the first issue you receive does not please you, you may return it, and your subscription payment will be returned in full.

RECONSTRUCTIONIST

270 WEST 89th STREET NEW YORK, NY 10024

(Clip and Return)

YES! I want to subscribe to the *Reconstructionist* Magazine.

Name _____

Street _____

City & State _____

Zip code _____

I have enclosed:

☐ $20 for one year (eight issues)

☐ $35 for two years

☐ $50 for three years

☐ Foreign $3 per year extra

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

changing political environment. One can see how it is possible for the army to be responsible for brutal and unjustifiable killings while at the same time committed to democratic reforms. One can see guerrillas claiming to speak for the welfare of the people, and in some places fighting with the help of people who deserve our sympathy and respect, but nevertheless following a policy of massive death and destruction in the pursuit of sectarian power.

Mr. Falcoff begins by noting that the Central American controversy is the latest phase of a civil war within our foreign-policy establishment over questions such as "the proper uses of U.S. power" and "the causes of political insurgency." It is important to recognize that, at least in the case of Central America, the underlying disagreement is about *facts*, not theory, values, or international strategy. There is no need to debate philosophy or principle with the supporters of the guerrillas in El Salvador or of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua; in almost all cases they are wrong on the facts. Those liberals who examine the facts, even though they lead in "surprising" directions, will avoid helping their own enemies.

MAX SINGER
Chevy Chase, Maryland

MARK FALCOFF writes:

Tom J. Farer's arguments in the chapter in question reminded me of the roads in the Mexican states of Oaxaca and Chiapas: so many S-curves that one was left a bit giddy and confused.

Comforting as it is to learn now that Mr. Farer favors power-sharing in Nicaragua, I wish he would give me a more convincing idea of how—once we have eliminated the contras—he expects it to come about. Contrary to what he says, our support of the FDN and other armed insurrectionists has not made the Sandinista government "more malleable on certain issues of foreign policy"; and while it assuredly has not made the Sandinistas more "liberal" and less "comprehensively authoritarian" at home, why should it? These are people whose own ideology (and *praxis*) is authoritarian enough without any help from us. Other Marxist governments have proven remarkably impervious to "the legitimate, overt instruments of economic suasion and cultural penetration," with or without the assistance of democratic governments elsewhere. Under such circumstances, too, the views and predilections of the Nicaraguan *people* are, unfortunately, wholly irrelevant.

With respect to means and ends, I am sorry to say that since I am not a law professor (which Mr. Farer is) or a Catholic theologian (which, despite his style of reasoning, he is not), I cannot share his notion that all foreign policies can be immaculately conceived. We are dealing here with some pretty harsh realities on the ground, not the niceties of dialectical argument in the college classroom.

I AM afraid that in the case of David Isenberg, the misunderstanding is wholly on the other side. He misses entirely the point of my opening statements: I do not think that there is a "hostile conspiracy" to prevent Americans from knowing more about Central America—far from it. Rather, since Americans appear (for whatever reason) not to be particularly interested in the subject despite "the vast menu," as I called it, "of information, allegation, and misinformation served up to them," the space for opinion-molding is entirely surrendered to very small numbers of people—religious lobbies, citizens' commissions, and so forth. In and of itself I'm not sure this is bad: how many ordinary people have time to think about foreign policy at the end of their working day? But since Central America has become the province of a tiny issue elite who *do* have time to read scholarly (or "scholarly") studies, many of the notions which dominate the larger public discussion are limited in number and at best not very profound, particularly by the time they trickle down to the level of presidential candidates, as shown in the recent campaign.

I should add that if Mr. Isenberg thinks that the parameters of the debate over these past four years have been entirely or even principally defined by the White House or the National Security Council, he is sorely misinformed. Nor—in spite of some extremely deceptive theatrics on the evening television news—is concern about "losing" Central America limited to Republicans.

With respect to Mr. Isenberg's third point, all I can do is read back to him whole passages of my article:

> While the "floor" beneath Central Americans rose dramatically, the gap widened between rich and poor, and particularly between rural and urban dwellers. Much of the new infrastructure . . . was financed either by U.S. aid or by the international lending institutions; tax collections remained generally low, so that what the foreigner was not willing to finance generally remained undone. That is why, in spite of nearly two decades of progress, as late as 1981 it was estimated that 42 percent of the population remained in "extreme" poverty.

But I go on to insist that even if the process of development had continued in a linear fashion "the region would have experienced serious political instability because of the challenge posed by economic and social change to existing political structures, particularly in Guatemala and El Salvador."

Mr. Isenberg's discussion of future economic aid is firmly anchored in the remote past; let me bring him up to date. Three of the five Central American nations (Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador) are now democracies; the one textbook example of an armed dictatorship of the Right (Guatemala) currently has a Constituent Assembly (elected a few months ago) that is writing a new constitution under which elections will be held in mid-1985. As things stand now, by next year the only "armed dictatorship" in the region will be Nicaragua. And if there *is* a regression to military rule in either El Salvador or Honduras, Mr. Isenberg can rest assured that neither will receive massive economic aid—indeed, in all probability all assistance will be cut off by the U.S. Congress.

Mr. Isenberg prefers to accept Robert S. Leiken's description of the FMLN-FDR. That is his privilege. He should understand, however, that others feel under no such obligation. Certainly I do not think it requires "a considerable act of faith" to state that people who profess a Marxist-Leninist ideology are likely to have a deep affinity with the Soviet Union, merely a knowledge of contemporary history—i.e., the record of Soviet Communism at home and abroad, its technique of creating front organizations, and its sponsorship of such "coalitions" as the Socialist Unity party in East

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Germany or the NLF in Vietnam. Now, I do not know whether these views are shared by Reverend Falwell, but it would not disturb me very much if they were. I do happen to know, however, that on this point they are shared by the AFL-CIO, the *New Republic,* and other liberal institutions in whose company I am entirely comfortable.

I am glad that Mr. Isenberg brings up U.S. assistance to Nicaragua, because it allows me to clarify a very critical point. First of all, I underestimated slightly the actual amount authorized: it was $117.2 million, of which about $102 million had been disbursed before the Carter administration decided to suspend aid when the evidence of Nicaraguan arms shipments to El Salvador had become too enormous to continue to ignore. Now, that aid actually fell into four categories: (a) development assistance; (b) the economic support fund; (c) PL-480 (surplus food); and (d) "other" (Peace Corps, etc.). Aid to the Nicaraguan private sector was disbursed only in two years—1981 and 1982, and only under the economic support fund. About $34 million went to the private sector in 1981 and $5.1 million in 1982; this amounted to about 35 percent of all U.S. aid. The rest went to humanitarian assistance and economic reconstruction.

There was nothing particularly subversive about the allocation of funds to the Nicaraguan private sector. In 1979 and 1980 the Sandinistas insisted that they wished to create a mixed economy, and desperately needed funds to reactivate the private sector. Indeed, it was *they* who signed the agreements with the Agency for International Development. As for the Somoza family industries which the Sandinistas nationalized, it was long known that many were uneconomical and even irrational, and run at a loss for the benefit of the dynasty. The burden of their deficits was piggybacked onto the foreign debt. Not surprisingly, the United States did not wish to rescue what the Sandinistas were themselves (at the time) the first to call white elephants.

But while we are on the subject of the foreign debt, why does Mr. Isenberg ignore the favorable rollover of $582 million by private U.S. bankers? That, more than the aid disbursed by the U.S. Congress, is the surest sign of the good will with which this country began its relations with Sandinista Nicaragua.

With respect to Mr. Isenberg's final point, I must confess that I do not know how many troops "we should be prepared to sacrifice in order to overthrow the Nicaraguan government," any more than I know how many troops we should be prepared to "sacrifice" in order to defend Western Europe against Soviet invasion, secure free access to the Persian Gulf for Western shipping, or, for that matter, preserve the territorial integrity of our own country. Stated in terms of dead and wounded alone, no war is worth fighting—which may, of course, be Mr. Isenberg's ultimate point. In the particular case of Nicaragua, I concede that to invade another nation is a very serious business. It should be done only when an extreme threat to our own security exists, and even then only as a last resort. Whether such conditions exist now (or will exist in the future) is a matter for serious debate among reasonable and well-informed people. But if the *comandantes* in Managua ever get the idea that invasion is simply beyond discussion and wholly inadmissible for reasons of U.S. domestic politics, then they are very likely to do the things that will make such an eventuality inevitable. What I am proposing, then, is the familiar strategy of deterrence—the credible threat of force to prevent the necessity of its use. If Mr. Isenberg cannot grasp the difference between that and unbridled militarism, then I am afraid he is incapable of further instruction by me.

MAX SINGER'S long and very interesting letter repeats what I have heard him say on numerous occasions in Washington. I believe, however, it would be wrong for anyone to underestimate the difficulties that face us in building a civilian, democratic order in El Salvador. Indeed, overselling policies is what has led the United States government into serious trouble in the past with its own people, and that, after all, is where the battle for our foreign policy is ultimately lost or won. But it is an unaccustomed pleasure to be criticized from a different direction, and I hope Mr. Singer will not mind if I luxuriate a bit in the sensation.

The Middle East

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of my book, *The New Diplomacy* [Books in Review, August 1984], Martin Sieff, described as "a specialist in Middle Eastern affairs who is on the staff of the Belfast *Telegraph,*" argues against my theme that the ideological gain for Communism in the Arab world has been small. Mr. Sieff asks rhetorically whether I can credibly say such things "in the light of the Soviet Union's relations with Qaddafi's Libya, Khomeini's Iran, Mengistu's Ethiopia, and Assad's Syria."

This is the first time that I have encountered a "specialist in Middle Eastern affairs" who believes that Iran and Ethiopia are Arab states, or part of an "Arab world." A warning against the unscholarly habit of underestimating the diversity of the Middle East by the use of inaccurate generalization runs as a thread through my Middle Eastern chapter. Mr. Sieff's fallacy of definition entitles me to challenge his credentials as a "specialist." The challenge is relevant, since an ideological influence restricted to such marginal entities as Syria and Libya could quite justifiably be described as "small" in relation to Soviet hopes and efforts in the Arab world.

On a factual point in which I claim precedence for my own version, I must cite Mr. Sieff's assertion that in May 1967 I "urged Israel to put its trust in an American-led international flotilla that would, supposedly, break the blockade of the Straits of Tiran." I "urged" nothing of the kind. I "urged" in language of the utmost skepticism that we allow the United States to exhaust what I called in my dispatch the "dubious effort" to construct a flotilla in order to insure American support for our military action which I described as "inevitable." In this context I urged our Cabinet on June 4, 1967 to take military action. The documentary description of my attitude is contained in my book, *Abba Eban: An Autobiography,* published with Cabinet consent in 1977. A "specialist" should take account of official texts and first-hand witnesses, especially if he wants to contest them. Both Lyndon B. Johnson and Couve de Murville have made it plain in their memoirs and records that when I left them they understood that Egypt's action in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my view should and would incur an Israeli military response.

Finally, Mr. Sieff is eccentric in ascribing the errors in estimating Egypt's military intentions to "diplomatic failures" followed by military success. Since Israel had no diplomatic tools for estimating military intentions in Egypt, the only authorized sources for estimating those intentions were those of the well-staffed military-intelligence branch which passionately asserted in the first half of 1967 that Nasser, "tied down in Yemen," would not attempt war for several years; and in October 1973 that Egyptian military concentrations and movements were innocent! In the latter case the Agranat Commission laid heavy censure on the military arm and none at all on the diplomatic establishment, which I headed. Again, it is not unusual for reviewers to be puzzled by the bizarre division of functions in pre-1973 Israel. But then they should disclaim the title of "specialist in Middle Eastern affairs."

ABBA EBAN

The Knesset
Jerusalem, Israel

MARTIN SIEFF writes:

My inclusion of Ethiopia and Iran under the term Arab world was an unfortunate slip, but one that hardly alters the substance of the case. Would Abba Eban seriously deny the place of Syria and Libya in the Arab world? Or South Yemen and Algeria, neither of which I cited but both of which are most certainly in the Soviet-backed radical Muslim camp? And does he mean to deny the impact of events in Iran upon the Arab world, particularly on the Shi'ite militias in Lebanon and on the radical terrorists who killed the 240 U.S. Marines last year in Beirut? Because Iran is not Sunni Muslim does not mean it can be ruled out as a significant factor in the Arab world.

I asserted that in May 1967 Mr. Eban urged Israel to put its trust in the U.S. flotilla. By June 4, this effort had obviously failed. Mr. Eban presents the several weeks' delay as a triumph of diplomacy while Israel prepared for the inevitable war. He fails to note the crisis of confidence within Israel itelf during these weeks, which led to the appointment of General Dayan as Minister of Defense—an appointment which reflected the collapse of popular faith in Premier Levi Eshkol and his Foreign Minister, Mr. Eban.

Mr. Eban challenges my credentials as a "specialist." I did three years of graduate studies under Professor Elie Kedourie at the London School of Economics, specializing in modern Middle East history. For three years I was the primary research officer for the British Academy's Anglo-Palestine research project. Over a two-year period (1977-79), I was a regular contributor on Middle Eastern affairs to the Jerusalem *Post*. During that period I consistently expressed and defended the view that an Israel-Egypt peace would be established, but that neither Jordan nor Syria would join it, and that PLO-Syrian hostility would lead to a major crisis on Israel's north and east frontiers (this, four years before the 1982 Lebanese war). In early 1978, over nine months before Khomeini's revolution, I predicted the coming war between Shi'ite Iran and Sunni Iraq. I will be happy to set this record of prescience beside that of any specialist Mr. Eban would like to name.

Finally, I note that Mr. Eban refers to Libya and Syria as "marginal entities" in the Arab world. In so doing he is attempting to justify a thesis—that the Soviet Union and the radical Muslims represent fading forces in the Middle East. It remains a mystery to me that a professional diplomat of Mr. Eban's experience could believe either of these untenable propositions.

Comparable Worth

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am as much against the idea of comparable worth as Michael Levin is ["Comparable Worth: The Feminist Road to Socialism," September 1984], but now I feel a little embarrassed to be in his camp. I must say, however, that I appreciate Mr. Levin's commendable candor: unlike some anti-feminists who pose as true champions of women's rights, he does not hesitate to show his true colors. It is not just the free market or the family that he defends but, first and foremost, male dominance—and of that he makes no secret.

I am one of those opponents of comparable worth whom Mr. Levin views with "mixed feelings" because, while criticizing the means by which Gloria Steinem *et al.* would achieve equality for women, we do not oppose the end itself. While recognizing that pay inequity is largely a result of women's traditional roles rather than of discrimination, we do not regard the perpetuation of these roles as inevitable or desirable.

Mr. Levin cites recent research on sex differences as proof that male superiority is innate and uneliminable from human society. He is doubly wrong: in the first place, the findings in question have been disputed, or regarded as insufficiently convincing, by a great number of prominent biologists, psychologists, and sociologists, both male and female; Mr. Levin ought to know how many times in the past supposedly irrefutable evidence of women's inferiority has been subsequently disproved. In the second place, most of the researchers on sex differences (among whom there are feminists) categorically deny allegations that their conclusions serve to validate women's traditional role. They stress the fact that mental and psychological differences between the sexes are not absolute—that is, while certain characteristics are more common in men than in women, or vice versa, they are never the exclusive domain of one sex only; in many instances, the overlap is very large and differentiation is much greater among individuals than between the sexes. Most of these researchers also maintain that male-female differences as they exist today are not the result of biology only or of socialization only, but of both. Thus the "nature-vs.-nurture" controversy is far from over.

But if we admit that women's socialization puts them at a disadvantage in the labor market, then, Mr. Levin worries, "wouldn't it be well to change custom and tradition so that little girls were raised to be prepared emotionally for becoming surgeons" or entering other high-paying professions? From there, he jumps to the rather arbitrary conclusion that supporters of such social change would necessarily want to accomplish their goals by government intervention. It is true that many feminists look to the state to implement their values, but so do some conservatives, e.g., the backers of the Family Protection Act.

I suppose Mr. Levin may be forgiven for not knowing that there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has already been plenty of change in that direction. As surveys and in-depth studies show, more than two-thirds of today's parents believe boys and girls should be raised alike, or with minimal differences; and about three-quarters of adolescent girls reject the traditional feminine role. The career plans of male and female college and high-school students are very similar (except that the majority of girls do plan to stay home or work part-time while taking care of their babies; but a sizable minority of the boys also say they'd like to work part-time when their children are small). More than a third of students in medical, law, and business schools, and about a fifth of engineering students, are now female. (One study, done in 1983 by Illinois psychologist Helen Farmer, actually showed that, on the whole, high-school girls have higher ambitions than their masculine counterparts, with a third choosing careers in "nontraditional" technical fields.)

The idiotic and socialist notion of "equal pay for comparable work" must be fought, but conservatives, who are already perceived as "anti-woman," ought to be more careful in choosing their weapons.

It is interesting to note the striking similarities between the positions of anti-feminist ultra-Right conservatives and of socialist ultra-Left feminists. Both believe that capitalism necessitates the subjection of women. Both believe that patriarchy and a rigid differentiation of gender roles are at the core of our social and family structures. Both believe that a major goal of conservatism is to stem the tide of change leading to greater sexual equality and the blurring of roles. This harmony is truly inspiring. With friends like Michael Levin, who needs enemies like Gloria Steinem?

CATHERINE YOUNG
Neptune City, New Jersey

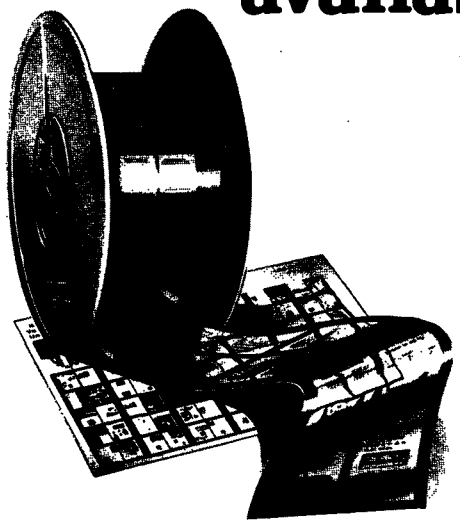
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Michael Levin's article on comparable worth is not only a superb refutation of this doctrine but also a wonderful—albeit ancillary—defense of the importance of letting market forces determine prices, or wages.

As Nobel laureate F.A. Hayek has spent a lifetime stating, an economic system in which prices are subject to market forces will transmit pertinent information and incentives to the economic players far more efficiently than any centralized planning board. Unfortunately, comparable worth, if implemented, would supplant this classical position of Hayek's, thereby wreaking untold havoc on the economy.

Notwithstanding Mr. Levin's fine article, it should be pointed out that he mistakenly states that interest rates are the price of money. Interest rates are the price of credit, not money. The price of money

This publication is available in microform.



University Microfilms International

University Microfilms International reproduces this publication in microform: microfiche and 16mm or 35mm film. For information about this publication or any of the more than 13,000 titles we offer, complete and mail the coupon to: University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Call us toll-free for an immediate response: 800-521-3044. Or call collect in Michigan, Alaska and Hawaii: 313-761-4700.

☐ Please send information about these titles:

_____

_____

Name _____

Company/Institution _____

_____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone ( ) _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is the goods and services that can be bought with a given quantity of money. I hope that this is not considered a captious distinction. The failure to make it has led to much confusion in discussions of money, credit, and interest rates.

PAUL D'ANDREA
Oak Lawn, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

At the end of "Comparable Worth: The Feminist Road to Socialism," Michael Levin expresses concern that he may be labeled a crank for prophesying an end to the free market if the comparable-worth doctrine should be applied to adjust pay scales for work done by women. I would suggest that he has in fact underestimated the threat to the free market.

I agree with Mr. Levin that only the government can solve the "problem" of wage discrimination by gender and that to do so it would have to act broadly rather than piecemeal. However, it is also the case that, once we concede the competence of the government to determine "just" wages, then we must permit it to determine "just" wages for all jobs, regardless of whether gender discrimination is alleged to have influenced levels of pay in the particular category. If we have the capacity to do the "right" thing, it would be unconscionable to leave substantial sectors of the labor market to the iniquity and chaos of market forces.

The irony, of course, is that once the government becomes the arbiter of all wages, the results will be quite different from what the proponents of comparable worth imagine. Those who are able to influence the process will reap enormous economic rewards. Inevitably, politicians, labor unions, trade and professional associations, and all sorts of new groups and coalitions (which will surely spring up to exploit the new opportunities) will compete for control of the boards setting pay scales, and of the legislative bodies which will oversee appointments to them and control their purse-strings. The weak will be weakened and the strong strengthened.

Which brings me to my second point of difference with Mr. Levin: the result will not be socialism. It will be a unique American invention in which the means of production are privately owned but in which all key economic decisions will be made by the government (which, if it can determine "just" wages, can surely be relied on to determine "just" prices, too) in a totally politicized process. Compared to this, socialism will look rather attractive.

PETER BIENSTOCK
Wallkill, New York

MICHAEL LEVIN writes:

Having lost count of the number of times I have been told that I am just like the feminists—such *tu quoque*'s being a common rhetorical trick—I will speak instead to Catherine Young's specific points. First, I do not advocate "male dominance" or claim that women are inferior: I challenge Miss Young to cite a single syllable in my piece that conveys such ideas. My position is that the sexes *differ*, and that the much-deplored wage gap is but one manifestation of this difference. I am pleased, however, that Miss Young endorses all my animadversions against the lunatic concept of comparable worth.

Miss Young implies that controversy still rages among scientists about the existence and significance of innate sex differences. With very few exceptions, it doesn't. And incidentally, what scientists *think* the implications of sex differences ought to be is a far cry from what these implications actually are in the real world. The surveys Miss Young rather selectively cites are all very well, but what a young father fearful of appearing reactionary tells a social scientist about how he raises his children has little to do with how he actually does raise them.

Times are of course changing, but it is not clear that the basic sexual division of labor will ever change, least of all in advanced industrial democracies, in which wage labor is strongly separated from child-rearing.

As to the role of government, first, the (unpassed) Family Protection Act is a very modest measure to limit government subsidization of feminist propaganda, and cannot be compared with the vast government machinery now deployed in the active service of feminism. At its most "conservative," the act forbids the government from funding educational programs that explicitly attack motherhood. Is such restraint so shocking in a government that also currently funds the sub-rosa distribution of contraceptives to thirteen-year-old girls?

Second, while it might be logically possible for feminists to refrain from demanding that government be the instrument for ending the sexist oppression they see everywhere, in fact feminists have never adopted such a position. To be sure, there is a small group of "libertarian feminists" who blame the supposed economic sufferings of women on government overregulation; they point, for instance, to laws that once forbade women from tending bar. Now I agree that such laws unwarrantedly infringe on individual liberty, and they may have deprived a few women of lucrative employment, but overall their contribution to the wage gap and the sexual segregation of the workforce is very minor. If libertarian feminists think that the end of protective legislation will create a unisex workforce, they are living in a dream world.

To Paul D'Andrea: point taken. Still, my imprecise formulation has the virtue of being provocative. Show people a $5 bill and ask them how much it should cost. One hundred out of one hundred will take the reply "$5" as self-evident. It is bracing for them to realize that at current interest rates the use of a bank's $5 for ten years will cost about $12. Everything has its price, including (use of the bank's) money.

I could not agree more emphatically that comparable worth and its progeny will be at best a Kafkaesque variant of socialism, for the reasons Peter Bienstock cites. The New Dealers who introduced the first great wave of economic regulation may have flirted with socialism in their youth, but they were conservative by temperament and conviction. They responded to well-defined economic problems with what they felt were rational measures. The difference in scale between the interventionism of the 1930's and that of the 1960's has yet to be fully measured.

It is a mark of feminist hypocrisy that no demand has arisen for subjecting *all* pay scales to comparable-worth analyses. Feminists are not interested in universal justice even as proclaimed by their own lights, only in making men and women come out the same.

Finally, if I might make a general comment, I wonder at the persistent inability of politicians and the media to distinguish the demands of feminists from those of women. In her acceptance speech

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the Democratic convention in July, Geraldine Ferraro made much of the 59¢ women earn for every dollar men earn. During the first presidential debate, Walter Mondale, who is supposed to have won handily, grandly invoked "equal pay for equal effort." When, on the other hand, a Reagan appointee referred to comparable worth as a "truly crazy idea," the media treated the comment as another of the administration's anti-woman gaffes. Yet Mondale-Ferraro were not only trounced in the general election, they lost the female vote to Reagan by 10 percent.

The Kennedys

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Johnson's review of our book, *The Kennedys: An American Drama* [Books in Review, October 1984], illustrates how an ideological bias can be just as crippling on the Right as on the Left. He finds our narrative inadequate on the grounds that we didn't throw more light on how Joe Kennedy made and spent his money, because "money is the key to the Kennedy success." Really? If this were so, then Hunts and Rockefellers would be Kennedys. Like many conservatives, Mr. Johnson has an evident problem with the sexual promiscuity of the Kennedy males. "How could such monsters . . . impress themselves so forcefully on the nation, indeed on the world?" Perhaps from such a perspective money is the only answer. But it is a travesty to suggest, as Mr. Johnson does, that our portrait of Jack Kennedy is painted in such narrow and negative moralistic hues. In fact, our narrative rescues a heroic dimension of the personal life of Jack Kennedy from the obscurity to which it was consigned by the family political mythology, and which ironically goes a long way toward explaining the elusive charisma that allowed him to charm men and nations.

Mr. Johnson is relentless in imposing his own agenda on our book, which he ignorantly describes as "an attack from the Left." His justification for this remark is our failure to discuss "the fake returns in Illinois and Texas, which probably gave Kennedy the White House." Mr. Johnson concludes that our omission can be explained by our unwillingness "to put the record straight for the benefit of [the Kennedys'] Republican opponents." Where can Mr. Johnson have gotten this ridiculous idea? Surely not from our chapters on the Kennedy Presidency which portray Kennedy as weak and inconsistent in a manner that bears far more resemblance to the critiques of the Republican Right at the time than to those of the Democratic Left. Our decision not to focus attention on the question of electoral fraud in the 1960 election was partly because the evidence for it was inconclusive, but mainly because there is no evidence at all that the Kennedy brothers were themselves involved in any such fraud, and hence it remains on the periphery of our interest, which is the Kennedy character and not the vicissitudes of Democratic and Republican party politics.

Finally, our book was neither conceived nor written as an attack on the Kennedys. Only someone deaf to its tonalities and sympathies —an infirmity often induced by ideological straining—could mistake it for one.

PETER COLLIER and
DAVID HOROWITZ
Los Angeles, California

PAUL JOHNSON writes:

Peter Collier and David Horowitz are entitled to let off steam on receiving a critical review, but their letter confirms my feeling that authors are nearly always ill-advised to write complaining letters. All the points on which they disagree with me are legitimate matters of opinion.

Isaac Leeser

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jonathan D. Sarna's fine review of the book I edited, *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940* [Books in Review, October 1984], is deeply appreciated. He caught the main thrust of the book: the interesting partnership that developed between Philadelphia's intellectual and cultural Jewish leadership and the more business-oriented New York community in building the institutional structure of Jewish life in this country in the crucial period between the 1880's and the 1920's. I must respectfully differ with Mr. Sarna, however, on what he calls my "boosterism" with regard to the extraordinary role played by Isaac Leeser and the publication he edited, the *Occident*. Perhaps I should have been more precise, but the fact is that Leeser did introduce the first regular English sermons in this country. As for the *Occident*, it was for almost six years the only Jewish publication in the U.S., and for eleven years it had little competition. On *Adon Olam* I indeed wrote poorly, but the fact remains that the musical notation for the hymn was first published in the *Occident*. But Leeser does not need any defense from me. What he does need is a biographer.

MURRAY FRIEDMAN
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

JONATHAN D. SARNA writes:

I am grateful to Murray Friedman for his kind words and helpful clarification. This time, though not in his book, he does seem to have his facts right about Isaac Leeser. *Adon Olam*, however, remains a problem. While I am no expert in the history of Jewish music, I find in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* that the great Italian Jewish composer Solomon de Rossi's music for *Adon Olam* was published in Venice as early as 1622. How then can it be a "fact" that "the musical notation for the hymn was first published in the *Occident*," which did not appear in Philadelphia until 1844?

Hilaire Belloc

TO THE EDITOR of COMMENTARY:

Edward Pearce's review of the biography of Hilaire Belloc by A.N. Wilson [Books in Review, November 1984] calls to mind the poet Humbert Wolfe's sardonic epitaph for Belloc's friend, G.K. Chesterton:

Here lies
Mr. G.K. Chesterton
Who might have gone to heaven
But didn't
When he heard the news
That the place
Was full of Jews.

Judging by the review, the epitaph, with a change of name, would be equally suitable for Belloc's tombstone.

JULES ROTHMAN
Middlebury, Connecticut

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

In the world of ideas, no other magazine comes close.

COMMENTARY 165 East 56 Street, New York, NY 10022

I want to discover Commentary's world of ideas. Please enter my twelve-month subscription for the regular price of $33.00.

☐ My check for $33.00 is enclosed. ☐ Bill me

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why the Democrats Lost

Joshua Muravchik

IN 1984 the McGovernization of the Democratic party was completed. "McGovernism" is a poor term, but the most enduring one, for a political temper or movement which began well before Senator George McGovern became its exemplar. The movement was called the "new politics" by its original cheerleaders, and later was called "New-Left liberalism" or "counterculture liberalism" by its critics. But McGovernism is the term that has stuck.

This movement was born in 1968 when the presidential campaign of Eugene McCarthy succeeded in persuading thousands of activists from the student Left to take time out from peace marches to work as canvassers in the Democratic primaries. Purists among the campus radicals decried such efforts to "work within the system," but the vast bulk of their comrades chose to go "neat and clean for Gene." They discovered that by shedding beards and beads and revolutionary rhetoric, they could in fact constitute a potent force in behalf of their most cherished goals.

First among these goals was the withdrawal of the United States from Vietnam, without conditions and regardless of consequences. More broadly, the movement sought to rid U.S. foreign policy of the doctrine of containment, which it rightly saw as having led the United States into Vietnam, and to reduce the size of the American armed forces so as to make overseas military action less feasible.

The second of its goals was "racial justice," a concept that went beyond the civil-rights movement's original objective of equal treatment for each individual irrespective of race or creed. Racial justice, as the movement understood it, entailed granting special advantages to members of certain groups in the hope of compensating for past mistreatment. The list of groups entitled to such advantages expanded steadily. In addition to blacks, it came to include Hispanics, Indians, Eskimos, women, youth, and homosexuals.

The third goal of the movement was "reform." Reform of the Democratic party, reform of the presidential nominating process, reform of campaign financing, reform of the congressional seniority system, to name but a few. For those whose roots were so recently in the radical world of the student Left, the emphasis on reform made it possible to work within the system without conceding the bona fides of the system. The movement's own success demonstrated anew the extreme openness and responsiveness of the American political process, but to have conceded that the system possessed these virtues would have called into question the movement's other goals of diminishing America's influence in the world and replacing the traditional American principle of individual rights with the principle of compensatory group rights. In addition, "reform" was a useful vehicle for hastening the ascent of new entrants into the political process.

The movement first made use of the reform vehicle at the 1968 Democratic convention in an effort to block the nomination of Hubert Humphrey. The effort failed, but resulted in the creation of a "reform commission" headed by McGovern, who then captured the party's next presidential nomination. Many wondered aloud whether there was not some connection between McGovern's stunning upset victory over his Democratic rivals and the fact that he had written the new nominating rules, but there was little in the rules that gave special benefit to the McGovern candidacy. The more important advantage McGovern derived from his role as rule-writer was less tangible. It enabled him to don the mantle of reform. That, together with his stance as the party's most militant exponent of withdrawal from Vietnam, made his candidacy irresistible in a contest in which almost all his Democratic competition conceded that reform and Vietnam withdrawal were the order of the day.

The other important outcome of the "McGovern reforms" was the adoption by the Democrats of a quota system for the representation of certain minorities, women, and youth. The imposition of the quota rule was greased, in a cyncial precedent that was to be frequently copied, by the inclusion of some Orwellian doubletalk that appeared to renounce quotas. But initiates on all sides of the party's debates understood that the rules were designed to impose quotas while allowing party leaders to deny to the general public

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK, who has written on issues of public policy for COMMENTARY, the *New Republic*, the New York *Times Magazine*, and other publications, is completing a book on the human-rights policy of the Carter administration.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that this had been done. The McGovern staffers who wrote the language referred to it smugly in in-house memos as the "non-quota quotas."

As effective as McGovern was in the Democratic primaries, his candidacy was a disaster in the general election where the terms of debate were different. After he led the party to its worst defeat in modern history, traditionalist Democratic leaders were naturally eager to take control of the party back from the McGovernites. They succeeded in ousting McGovern's appointee from the party chairmanship and replacing her with one of their own. But that was to be their last victory. Two solid years of unrelieved factional battles ended in victory for the McGovernites at the party's 1974 mini-convention.

During those two years, the traditionalist politicians discovered that they had no taste for such internecine battles. They preferred to let the anti-McGovern banner be carried almost solely by the political apparatus of the AFL-CIO. Under the leadership of George Meany, the AFL-CIO was so staunchly opposed to what McGovern represented that it had refused to support him in the general election against its arch-nemesis, Richard Nixon. But a McGovernite faction arose within the labor movement itself. It comprised two giant independent unions outside the AFL-CIO, the automobile workers and the National Education Association, as well as a number of unions within the AFL-CIO (the machinists, the communications workers, the state, county, and municipal employees, and a handful of smaller unions). This faction constituted only a minority within the house of labor, but a large enough one to lead Meany to call in his troops for fear of splitting the labor movement. Following the 1974 mini-convention, at which a labor-led effort to renounce the party's quota system was humiliatingly trounced, the AFL-CIO gave up trying to act as a counterweight to the McGovernites within the party.

JIMMY CARTER, who won the Democratic nomination in 1976, was personally no McGovernite, and yet his administration constituted a large milestone in the McGovernization of the party. Carter won the nomination in part by positioning himself above the fray between McGovernites and anti-McGovernites. He let it be known that before the foreign-policy debate with President Ford he sought briefings both from Paul Warnke and Paul Nitze, the avatars, respectively, of Democratic dovishness and Democratic hawkishness. If Carter tilted at all on the substantive issues, it was toward the anti-McGovern position. In the debate he attacked Ford from the Right on the issues of détente and the Helsinki accords, provoking Ford's fatal gaffe about Poland. The Washington *Post*'s Stephen Rosenfeld wrote during the campaign: "Senator Henry Jackson (D.-Wash.) may have lost the battle for the Democratic presidential nomination but—to judge by the foreign and defense chapters of the Democratic platform . . . —he has largely won the policy war."

But when Carter took office, Warnke was appointed chief SALT negotiator and head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, while Nitze and his fellow anti-McGovernites in the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM) were systematically excluded from positions in the new administration. CDM Chairman Ben Wattenberg complained that CDM's was a "missing point of view" in the new Carter team. Conversely, Alan Baron, the sparkplug of the McGovernite faction on the Democratic National Committee, reported gleefully in his newsletter that "George McGovern told friends that he considers the majority of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's appointments to date to be 'excellent . . . quite close to those I would have made myself.' "

One of Carter's close long-time associates explained that it was Carter's style to "campaign conservative and govern liberal," but the staffing of the Carter administration had more profound implications. Both Carter's background and his campaign identified him as a centrist Democrat. The appointments to his administration therefore suggested that McGovernism had become the party's new orthodoxy and that its ideological antithesis—as exemplified by the hawkishness of Senator Jackson and CDM—was taboo.

The ideological assumptions that Carter imbibed from his McGovernite aides had much to do with the debacles—in Iran, in Nicaragua, in Afghanistan, in the United Nations—that brought his administration down. Carter's reelection defeat was also attributable in large measure to dissatisfaction with his economic policies, which were a cross between traditional Democratic liberalism and his own conservatism in this area, and in some degree to policies on social issues which owed much to McGovernite influence.

In the wake of the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan, Senator McGovern himself declared that "the whole liberal agenda has to be rethought." Walter Mondale said that intellectually the Democrats had been "running on empty," and that he himself was going to turn to a period of "studying and learning again." But it is impossible to see what came of all this study and rethinking, for the 1984 campaign revealed that the McGovernism of old was more firmly entrenched as Democratic orthodoxy than ever before.

MCGOVERN's capture of the Democratic nomination in 1972 had been viewed widely as a coup to which large sections of the party establishment refused to be reconciled. In 1984, by contrast, Mondale represented, as his campaign chairman James Johnson boasted, "the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

emergent consensus of the Democratic party." Indeed, the Mondale candidacy was put across by the very groups—elected Democratic officials, the South, and organized labor—that had most forcefully resisted McGovern's nomination in 1972.

Thus Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, introduced Mondale to its 1983 convention as someone "of that same mold" as "our old comrades in arms, Hubert Humphrey and Scoop Jackson." What Kirkland presumably meant was that Mondale's legislative career was characterized by dedication to bread-and-butter liberalism—Keynesian economics and extensive social-welfare programs. Such commitments were indeed common to Humphrey, Jackson, and Mondale. McGovern, on the other hand, though siding with labor on most of these issues, gave them much less emphasis. His pitch was not primarily aimed at the blue-collar audience that was the constituency of bread-and-butter liberalism. It was aimed, rather, at college-educated people, an audience that was then called the "new class" and is now known as the "yuppies."

But Humphrey and Jackson represented something more than devotion to Keynesianism and social welfare and blue-collar voters. They were also the exemplars of a tradition of tough-minded liberalism that was staunchly anti-Communist in foreign affairs. And it was precisely in this respect that Mondale was different. In style, Mondale, like Humphrey and Jackson, might have been more at ease with unions than with yuppies, and he might have been devoted to bread-and-butter liberalism, but on the issues at the heart of McGovernism—especially foreign and defense policy—Mondale was with the McGovernites.

The record is clear. During Mondale's twelve years in the Senate, the dovish Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) included 67 foreign-policy votes in its annual legislative scorecards. Mondale voted right, in ADA's eyes, 64 times and wrong only twice, missing one vote. Henry Jackson, by comparison, voted right, by ADA standards, just 12 times, wrong 50 times, and missed five votes. Conversely, the hawkish American Security Council (ASC) used 40 votes in its annual ratings during Mondale's Senate years, and found that Mondale voted right once, wrong 37 times, and missed two votes. Jackson voted right by ASC standards 34 times and wrong six times on those same votes.

Mondale's record on foreign affairs as Vice President was consistent with his votes in the Senate. It can be argued that Mondale should not be held accountable for the largely McGovernite policies of the Carter administration. But we have from Mondale himself a list of the issues on which the positions he took within the councils of the administration differed from the policy ultimately chosen by Carter, and in virtually every instance Mondale's recommendations were more dovish. He opposed Carter's initiation of draft registration. He opposed the grain embargo against the Soviet Union. He opposed Carter's plans for deploying the MX missile.

In addition, the memoirs of Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, reveal a clear pattern of alignment in the Carter administration's internal debates over foreign policy, pitting Mondale and Vance on the dovish side and Brzezinski and Defense Secretary Harold Brown on the relatively hawkish side. Brzezinski portrays Mondale as having resisted the niggardly increases in defense spending that the Carter administration proposed, and he ventures the guess that had Carter been reelected Mondale would have led an effort to block his reappointment as National Security Adviser on the ground that Brzezinski represented too hard-line an influence within the administration.

IN THE presidential campaign, in a marked departure from his earlier record, Mondale came out for a 4-5-percent increase in defense spending, but otherwise he ran for the Presidency in a way that was consistent with his record as a Senator and as Vice President. Echoing the code words in which the Carter administration expressed its reluctance to resist America's adversaries, Mondale told audiences that his goal was to give America "a foreign policy that proves our maturity, not our manhood." As for national defense, Mondale's opposition to the MX missile and the B-1 bomber combined with his support for the Midgetman missile and the Stealth bomber prompted Congressman Les Aspin, himself among the deans of American doves, to comment in a jocular but serious tone that "we liberals seem always to support whatever weapons systems are far off in the future and to oppose whatever ones are available today." Mondale also hammered away at Reagan's so-called "Star Wars" initiative, running frightening TV ads warning of "killer weapons" in space and neglecting to mention that the only thing these weapons would "kill" would be Soviet ICBM's. And he attacked Gary Hart for not having supported the nuclear freeze early enough and for having endorsed the so-called "build-down," an arms-reduction proposal formulated largely by Democrats who recognized that the nuclear-freeze idea was, as Brzezinski put it, a "hoax."

Mondale assured a CDM gathering that he was innocent of "isolationism or anti-Americanism.... We know that America has vital and legitimate interests in the world." But the rest was all hedging and qualification: "Democrats insist that our interests be sharply defined; publicly supported; congressionally sanctioned; militarily feasible; internationally defensible; open to independent scrutiny; and alert to regional history."

As a concrete example of what such criteria

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meant, Mondale opposed U.S. aid to the rebels in Nicaragua, and denounced the rebellion as an "illegal war." (He later spoke of "quarantining" Nicaragua, a term he did not define, but which, if taken literally, would be no less "illegal" than supplying aid to the rebels.) As for aid to El Salvador, he said that it should be "strictly condition[ed]" not only on bringing to justice the murderers of American churchwomen and union officials and on disbanding "the most lawless and notorious security forces" but also on "accelerating land reform." He called, too, for a withdrawal of U.S. forces from Honduras, albeit at a slower pace than proposed by Senator Hart.

Reagan's national-security policies as a whole Mondale denounced for having "ceded the moral high ground to the Russians" by showing too little "respect for the opinions of mankind." Accordingly, when Reagan ordered the invasion of Grenada, Mondale (though he would later reverse himself on this issue) at first objected that the invasion undermined "our ability to effectively criticize" Soviet actions in Afghanistan, Poland, and elsewhere.

Not that Mondale himself was always happy with criticism of the Soviet Union. He attacked Reagan for calling the Soviet Union an "evil empire" and for having "told us the Soviet build-up stems from an inherent drive for world domination." Throughout the campaign, moreover, he spoke of the interruption in arms-control negotiations—the effect of a unilateral walkout by the Soviet Union—in terms that blamed Reagan and exonerated the Soviets. And on one occasion he warned against the danger of "becoming like our enemies," while his running mate, Geraldine Ferraro, echoing this thought, declared that the controversial primer supplied by the CIA to the Nicaraguan rebels was "in the spirit of Stalin."

ON THE issue of racial justice, too, Mondale's stance was unmistakably in the McGovernite tradition. The draft of the Democratic platform, hammered out under the leadership of Geraldine Ferraro, rejected racial quotas but strongly endorsed a watered-down version of quotas, "goals and timetables," to redress racial inequality.

This, however, was not enough to satisfy Jesse Jackson and his supporters, who presented the Democratic convention with an amendment implicitly (if not altogether explicitly) endorsing the use of quotas. Some of Mondale's people urged him to muster his delegates to defeat Jackson's amendment on the floor, and thereby to dramatize the distance between his own views and those of Jesse Jackson. Instead, Mondale instructed his representatives to negotiate a compromise with the Jackson forces.

In the end, the two sides agreed on an amendment endorsing the "use of affirmative action goals, timetables, and other verifiable measures." The key words here were "other verifiable measures," a phrase of indeterminate meaning that each side was free to interpret its own way. Jackson's representative, Congressman Walter Fauntroy, said that the amendment "means quotas, without using the word." Mondale's representative, Congresswoman Barbara Mikulski, said that "'verifiable measures' does not mean quotas." New York's Mayor Koch, a supporter of Mondale and an opponent of quotas, acknowledged, according to the Washington *Post*, that the language did in effect mean quotas, but said he was reassured by Mondale's personal statements against quotas.

If this left any ambiguity about the direction that a Mondale-Ferraro administration would have taken on the quota issue, it was cleared up by Mondale's oft-repeated campaign pledge to undo the changes made by Reagan in the membership of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. For these changes, and the controversy that they evoked, revolved precisely around the issue of quotas. The Civil Rights Commission that Reagan inherited from President Carter stood squarely in favor of quotas "when quotas are needed to make equal opportunity a reality for members of historically excluded groups."

Reagan sought to replace these quota-oriented commissioners with others, mostly Democrats, who opposed quotas but who had clear records of support for civil rights. As a result, congressional opponents of Reagan's appointees focused neither on their individual records nor on defending quotas, which they knew to be unpopular. They focused instead on the charge that Reagan had undermined the independence of the Commission by seeking to bring it into line with his own policy preferences. This criticism led to a compromise in which some of Reagan's appointees were approved in exchange for changes in the law designed to assure the future independence of the Commission. Thus, it could not be argued that the goal of Mondale's campaign pledge was to preserve the Commission's independence, which was no longer in jeopardy except at his own hand. His goal was simply to restore the philosophical composition of the pre-Reagan, pro-quota Commission. The Mondale ticket's identification with that philosophy was underscored when Blandina Cardenas Ramirez, one of the pro-quota holdovers from the old Commission, was appointed "political coordinator" of the Ferraro campaign.

In addition to the murky language of the Democratic platform and Mondale's warm embrace of the quota advocates on the Civil Rights Commission, there were still other reasons to take Mondale's anti-quota protestations at less than face value. Although he had never been a zealot on the third pillar of McGovernism—"reform"—Mondale acquiesced in the demand of Gary Hart

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Jesse Jackson for the creation of a Fairness Commission to reform the party once again. The convention resolution creating the Fairness Commission stipulated that: "The Commission shall consist of at least 50 members equally divided between men and women, and shall include fair and equitable participation of Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian/Pacifics, women, and persons of all sexual preference [*sic*] consistent with their proportional representation in the party." The mandate of the Fairness Commission was precisely to assure "the full participation in the party process" of the exact same list of groups enumerated above. And it was directed to "examine the question of *assured percentages* of various disadvantaged groups in the composition of state delegations by racial, ethnic, and other categories *with the objective of making allocations similar to those now accorded on the basis of gender*" (emphasis added).

Since the allocations "now accorded on the basis of gender" are strict quotas, 1984 left the Mondale-led Democrats committed to embarking not only on what promised to be their most esoteric adventure in party reform ever, but also more committed to quotas than ever.

The nomination of Walter Mondale was by no means the only measure of the triumph of McGovernism in the 1984 Democratic campaign. Gary Hart and Jesse Jackson, the two other contenders for the Democratic nomination whose campaigns prospered sufficiently to sustain their candidacies until the national convention, stood even more firmly than Mondale in the McGovernite tradition. Both, for example, openly and explicitly endorsed quotas. But it was on issues of foreign policy that their McGovernism was most visible.

George McGovern has a propensity to see the best in Communist regimes. In his autobiography, for example, he writes that "Castro does not seem to be a dictator for his own sake, but a convinced revolutionary who is popular among his own people." When Soviet Premier Andropov died last year, McGovern said: "It is a modern tragedy that one of the Soviet Union's most intelligent and realistic leaders has served and died during the administration of the most ill-informed and dangerous man ever to occupy the White House." Mondale, for all his dovishness, has never shared sentiments like these. But Jesse Jackson certainly has.

Speaking in Cuba during the election campaign, Jackson delivered this peroration: "Long live Castro. Long live Martin Luther King. Long live Che Guevara. Long live our cry of freedom. Our time has come." He then accompanied Castro to church where the two sang, "We Shall Overcome." On other occasions he declared that the Sandinista government of Nicaragua was "on the right side of history," and that the United States had a foreign policy which "puts us on the wrong side of history." Describing the government of Salvadoran President Duarte as "another puppet regime" installed through a "sham of an election," he demanded that Duarte negotiate with the leftist guerrillas, but opposed similar negotiations between the Sandinistas and the rebels in Nicaragua.

As for Gary Hart, he began his political career as the manager of George McGovern's 1972 campaign, and his 1984 campaign sounded a distinct echo of McGovern's old slogan, "Come Home America." He advocated a complete cutoff of U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan rebels and to the government of El Salvador and a withdrawal of U.S. forces from Honduras. When Mondale said that he would put some conditions on withdrawal from Honduras, Hart accused him of having failed to "learn the . . . lesson of Vietnam." There was indeed much in the tone of Hart's statements about Central America that was reminiscent of the hyperbole of the Vietnam era. Hart accused President Reagan of "sending the sons of minorities and working people to serve as bodyguards for dictators" and he accused Walter Mondale of being unwilling to stop this. He warned that failure to follow his prescription for withdrawal from Central America would lead to the loss of "hundreds of thousands of American lives."

Throughout his Senate career, Hart, sensitive about his identification with McGovern, had presented himself as less a dove than a military reformer, even underscoring this by voting for some contested defense increases. The centerpiece of his reform proposals was his opposition to requests by the navy for additional nuclear aircraft carriers. Hart's alternative was to build a large number of smaller carriers. A large number of carriers, he explained, was "vital for effective support of diplomacy," especially in the Third World. But given the vehemence with which Hart campaigned in 1984 against any possible use of force by the United States in Central America or the Persian Gulf, and given, too, that it is hard to think of many Third World areas more vital to U.S. security than these, one is bound to wonder whether the real mission of Hart's fleet of mini-carriers was not to sink the navy's request for more nuclear carriers.

The roster of Democratic candidates in 1984 not only included many McGovernites, it also included McGovern himself. His candidacy never got very far, but it did win him a chorus of praise as "the conscience" of the party. This rankled Jesse Jackson, who felt that *he* was the "conscience" of the party. The two got into a bit of a spat over whose claim to this title was more compelling, but the claim of neither man was challenged by anyone else, except for a few who were angered by Jackson's anti-Semitic utterances. It was as if the party as a whole were conceding

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that its heart lay with McGovern and Jackson, while its head told it to be somewhat more moderate for the sake of the electorate.

If these events on the left wing of the Democratic spectrum revealed much about the state of the party, equally important symptoms could be found elsewhere on the spectrum. Two well-respected Democrats, Senators John Glenn and Ernest Hollings, both qualified to represent the Henry Jackson-John Kennedy-Harry Truman legacy, entered the Democratic lists. Yet rather than carry their own clear records into the primaries in the hopes of carving out a moderate Democratic constituency, both ran, implausibly and ineffectively, as "peace" candidates, Glenn stressing his devotion to a nuclear freeze and Hollings his opposition to the MX and his determination that defense spending not be spared from budget cuts.

The behavior of Glenn and Hollings lent weight to the argument made by Fred Barnes in the *American Spectator* that the "Jackson wing" of the party had died. Death is a poor metaphor in such circumstances because there are no limits to the number of lives a political tendency may have. The Jackson wing may yet fly again. But there is no doubt that Barnes put his finger on a real change. Henry Jackson, the flesh-and-blood leader and the inspiration of the Jackson wing, did die. And Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, once the acknowledged heir to the Jackson legacy, spurned the inheritance. It is, of course, possible to exaggerate the change in Moynihan, whose stance is still easily distinguishable from that of the flock of Democratic doves on Capitol Hill. But as is clear from his positions on such issues as the MX and Grenada, Moynihan has shifted, and the change was well captured by the *New Republic*'s Morton Kondracke when he wrote:

> The new Moynihan seems to put primary emphasis on the American government's obeying rules, rather than gaining geopolitical advantages in the struggle of systems that the old Moynihan considered the central concern of the contemporary world.

The most profound problem for the Jackson wing, however, has been the one least commented on—the shift within the AFL-CIO. The original clash between McGovernism and old-style liberalism reflected something of a class division, pitting the college-educated "new class" against blue-collar workers. Labor was hawkish, culturally conservative, and allergic to racial quotas of which the building-trades unions were among the first targets. McGovernites, on the other hand, tended to look down their noses at labor as benighted and out-of-date. For a few years the labor movement stood as the bulwark of anti-McGovernism within the Democratic party. It provided, for example, the bulk of the original support for the Coalition for a Democratic Majority.

But the McGovernites came to realize that it was wiser to woo than to ridicule labor. And the labor movement, feeling itself economically on the defensive since the beginning of the 1970's, came to feel that it could not afford to alienate potential allies in the liberal camp. It was, in any event, never well-suited to fighting ideological battles other than ones based on its own direct interests. More important, the McGovernite faction within the labor leadership had grown steadily as a younger generation replaced those leaders who had learned their hawkishness first-hand, battling the Communists for control of the unions in the immediate postwar years.

Lane Kirkland is every bit the hawk that his predecessor, George Meany, was. Indeed, if there is one man in public life today who best embodies the Henry Jackson tradition, it is Kirkland. But of the ten largest unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO, at least half are led by men ideologically aligned with the party's McGovernites. These McGovernites are far from having reversed the main tenets of labor's traditional anti-Communism, but they have begun to soften labor's hawkishness. The AFL-CIO now calls for cuts in defense spending and advocates rather stringent conditions on aid to El Salvador. And on some other issues labor has moved as well. It is outspoken on behalf of "comparable worth" and it joined Mondale in demanding reinstatement of the pro-quota members of the Civil Rights Commission.

Whatever Kirkland's personal views, his first worry as president of the federation is to preserve the movement's unity. He and those other labor leaders who share his attitudes may well be able to keep the labor movement from diverging too far from the Meany tradition in the stands it adopts on issues and in the help it gives to free unions around the world. But there is little prospect that the AFL-CIO will soon again be counted in the Henry Jackson wing of the Democratic party.

The current temper of the Democratic party was vividly displayed at the party's national convention in San Francisco. Among the delegates, there were more labor-union members and elected officials—once seen as the hope of party centrists—than ever before. And the proportion of women and minority-group members came closer than ever before to a perfect approximation of their proportions among Democratic voters. Nevertheless, on substantive issues, the delegates diverged farther from the Democratic electorate than ever before.

According to a survey by the New York *Times*, 50 percent of the delegates described themselves as liberals, 42 percent as moderates, and 5 percent as conservatives. Among Democratic voters, ac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cording to the then most current *Times* poll, 27 percent listed themselves as liberals, 44 percent as moderates, and 23 percent as conservatives.

On specific issues, when asked by the Washington *Post* whether "The United States should take all steps, including the use of force, to prevent the spread of Communism," only 22 percent of the Democratic delegates responded affirmatively, while 63 percent of Democratic voters said yes. Only 26 percent of the delegates, as against 55 percent of Democratic voters, answered yes when asked whether the military draft should be reinstated. Nine percent of the delegates, as compared to 46 percent of the Democratic voters, said they favored a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion. Ninety-one percent of the delegates, as against 63 percent of Democratic voters, favored passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Fifty-three percent of the delegates and only 19 percent of Democratic voters favored an immediate tax increase.

Interestingly, the delegates were *not* more liberal than Democratic voters on such traditional bread-and-butter issues as national-health insurance or government jobs programs, and by a 20-percentage-point margin the delegates were *less* apt than Democratic voters to agree with the proposition that "businessmen have too much power for the good of the country." In short, while the delegates were markedly more liberal than Democratic voters, the difference could be traced to the McGovern issues, not the Franklin Roosevelt issues.

The principal dynamic of the convention was the string of concessions made by Mondale to one Democratic group after another for the sake of party unity. The platform had already been drafted under Geraldine Ferraro's leadership with an eye to meeting the demands of as many interest groups as possible. In addition to the usual groups, new ones—Japanese-Americans, Micronesians, and Indians, for example—had won specific concessions, as had the homosexual community which was, according to the Washington *Post*, "one of the big winners" in the platform-drafting process.

But in San Francisco more was demanded. So Mondale yielded to Hart by including a plank in the platform that would bar the use of American force under almost any circumstances except to repel an invasion. He yielded to Jesse Jackson on quotas. He yielded to Hart and Jackson together on creating the Fairness Commission. He yielded to the Hispanic caucus on the subject of immigration, and to the National Organization for Women on his choice of a running mate. Geraldine Ferraro, said the New York *Times* aptly, was "the transcendent symbol of this Democratic gathering." Little wonder that the polls came to show that Mondale was not perceived as a "strong leader."

Curiously, there was one group that the Democrats in San Francisco refused to accommodate—Jews. In modern times the party had been anything but stinting in its solicitude for Jews. In fact, Democratic platforms had frequently set a line that was more undeviatingly pro-Israel than any Democratic administration would be likely to follow. And in the New York primary in 1984, Hart and Mondale had clashed frequently over the question of who was more fervent in his wish to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. But in San Francisco, when it was proposed that a plank condemning anti-Semitism be added to the platform, Mondale refused.

The proposed plank declared simply that the party "repudiate[s] and completely dissociate[s] itself from people who promote all forms of hatred, bigotry, racism, and anti-Semitism." It was pretty weak tea when read against a plank already in the platform concerning the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi party which called for prosecution of these groups by state, local, and federal authorities and the adoption of additional laws against them. But the anti-Semitism plank was attacked by Jesse Jackson's campaign manager, Arnold Pinckney, as "inappropriate" and "unnecessary." Congressman Mickey Leland (D.-Texas), another Jackson delegate, called the amendment "very divisive." They felt that it was aimed at Jackson and Louis Farrakhan, which, in a sense, it was, but Jackson could easily enough have diverted any critical implication pointing his way merely by strongly endorsing the amendment. That he refused to do so was revealing.

Equally revealing was Mondale's refusal to push the amendment over Jackson's objections. A compromise was finally reached between the Mondale camp and Jewish leaders that the amendment would be left out of the platform, but adopted as a resolution by the Democratic National Committee immediately after the convention. But the party leadership reneged even on this, and instead of a resolution, party chairman Charles Manatt merely read a statement decrying "bigotry and prejudice." When this brought protests from Jewish leaders, the DNC's executive committee finally adopted the anti-Semitism statement by telephone poll weeks later.

ALTHOUGH Mondale found it difficult to resist the demands of any group other than Jews, he showed some awareness of the need to reach out to voters who were not well represented at the convention. Unlike the convention's other featured speakers, Mondale pitched part of his acceptance speech toward the political Center, leading David Broder of the Washington *Post* to observe that "This had to be the first convention where Fritz Mondale came on as the most moderate spotlighted spokesman in the Democratic party." But Mondale's centrism had a hol-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

low ring. "Look at our platform," he said. "There are no defense cuts that weaken our security; no business taxes that weaken our economy; no laundry lists that raid our treasury." But any voter who did plow his way through that 58-page document would have found lots of defense cuts, large increases in business taxes, and dozens of proposed new federal programs. Whether these would have weakened our security or economy or raided our treasury is a matter of judgment.

Mondale's choice of Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate was, of course, a prime example of catering to special interests, but it was also an attempt to reach out to the broader electorate. Thus Congressman Tony Coelho of the Democratic campaign committee predicted that "A lot of ethnic Catholic Democrats around the country will identify with her and her background." And when Mondale first presented Geraldine Ferraro to the press, he described her as someone who had "worked hard for everything that she has achieved," someone with "a strong family life, deep religious conviction," and a model for "working Americans of average income."

Yet the real Geraldine Ferraro was a multimillionaire feminist who had left her two teenagers and her twelve-year-old daughter in Queens while she went to Washington from Mondays through Fridays to serve in Congress. The Washington *Post* described her as "an outspoken leader of the feminist movement." And Gloria Steinem exulted that the real victory was not in the selection of a woman, but in the selection of a woman with Geraldine Ferraro's politics. "It doesn't help to have them look like us and act like them," she told a women's gathering at the convention.

Despite all the talk about ethnics, Catholics, Italians, immigrants, and working people, Geraldine Ferraro really spoke for and to only one constituency in addition to feminists. That constituency was the "peace" movement. The Washington *Post* observed that "she and running mate Walter F. Mondale paradoxically seek to portray themselves as peace candidates despite the fact that the United States is not at war." One *Post* reporter wrote that "Ferraro cast the election as a referendum on arms control," while another said that "Ferraro has made the 'war-and-peace issue' the centerpiece of her candidacy." The New York *Times* commented that arms control was "her favorite issue" and she was several times quoted as saying that all other issues "pale by comparison."

The hollow symbolism of the Ferraro nomination backfired on the Democrats. The New York *Times*/CBS exit poll showed that Italian-Americans, a group that ordinarily leans toward the Democrats, voted the Reagan ticket by 57 to 42 percent, a ratio almost identical to that of the rest of the population. Catholics and blue-collar workers, both strongly Democratic constituencies to which Geraldine Ferraro was supposed to have appealed, also went for the Reagan ticket by margins of 11 and 8 percentage points, respectively.

Geraldine Ferraro's two genuine constituencies, feminists and supporters of the nuclear freeze, on the other hand, preferred the Mondale ticket. The Washington *Post*/ABC exit poll found that 16 percent of all voters said that the nuclear freeze was a significant issue in determining their votes, and of these, 64 percent voted for Mondale-Ferraro. It also found that among female voters 11 percent described themselves as strong feminists and 77 percent of these voted for Mondale-Ferraro. But the same exit poll also found that of the 89 percent of women voters who did not view themselves as strong feminists, 60 percent voted for Reagan.

All in all, women gave the Reagan ticket a large majority of their votes, and, strikingly, the "gender gap" was narrower in 1984 than it had been in 1980. Approximately half the voters said that Geraldine Ferraro's presence on the ticket had not affected their choice, but of those who said they had been affected, 26 percent reported that it had made them less inclined to vote for Mondale, while 16 percent said it had made them more inclined. Perhaps the most arresting statistic of all: among women voters who said they were affected by Geraldine Ferraro's presence on the ballot, 24 percent said it had made them less inclined to vote for Mondale, while 19 percent said the contrary.

THE most celebrated moment at the Democratic convention was the keynote speech delivered by New York Governor Mario Cuomo. Cuomo's superior delivery was widely hailed and earned him, said Washington *Post* TV critic Tom Shales, "claim to the title, Son of the Great Communicator." But it was Cuomo's words as much as his style that excited the Democrats. By repeatedly using the word "family," Cuomo showed, so they felt, how Democrats could recapture ground lost to the Republicans. Democratic campaign chairman Tony Coelho called the speech "fabulous" and added: "We've got to get the floating voters who went Republican in 1980. We need a message that the Democratic party is a home for them, and that's what Cuomo is saying."

But the great enthusiasm for Cuomo's speech only reflected the Democrats' penchant for hollow rhetoric. The Democrats seemed to believe that they had found in a single word the talisman that would protect them from the consequences of the wide discrepancy between their views and those of most voters. The irony was that aside from its invocations of the word, "family," Cuomo's speech was among the most radical given at the convention.

On foreign affairs, Cuomo accused Reagan, but not the Soviets, of "macho intransigence." He ac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cused Reagan, but not the Soviets, of "escalating to a frenzy the nuclear arms race." He accused Reagan, but not the Soviets, of indulging in "incendiary rhetoric." He accused Reagan, but not the Soviets who walked out of the arms negotiations, of "refusing to talk peace." He said falsely of the United States that: "We give monies to Latin American governments that murder nuns, and then lie about it." And he congratulated himself and other nuclear-freeze advocates for understanding: "That peace is better than war because life is better than death."

On domestic policy, Cuomo spoke of America as being "A Tale of Two Cities," one rich and one poor. He said America under the Republicans was divided "into the lucky and the left-out, the royalty and the rabble." There were one or two passing references to the "middle class," but the picture of America that Cuomo spent hundreds of words painting was a society consisting only of the haute bourgeoisie and the lumpenproletariat.

Cuomo was at his most radical precisely at the point where he brought his "family" theme to its climax and outlined what the commentators called his "vision of America":

> We believe in a single fundamental idea that describes better than most textbooks and any speech what a proper government should be. The idea of family. Mutuality. The sharing of benefits and burdens for the good of all. Feeling one another's pain. Sharing one another's blessings. . . . We believe we must be the family of America, recognizing that at the heart of the matter we are bound one to another, that the problems of a retired schoolteacher in Duluth are our problems. That the future of the child in Buffalo is our future. The struggle of a disabled man in Boston to survive, to live decently, is our struggle. The hunger of a woman in Little Rock, our hunger.

Cuomo, in short, was proposing to take us back to a politics that does not respect the essential differences between a family and a nation, that does not appreciate that the obligations and bonds which exist among members of a family are not the same as those which exist among the members of a polity. Aristotle argued that a society that bars us from loving our own children more than others is less likely to make us love all than to make us love none. But modern experience has taught us that there is a yet more appalling consequence to the confusion of polity and family, and that is the totalitarian state. We do, to be sure, owe important obligations to our fellow citizens, but the moment we allow or demand the kind of intrusion into one another's lives that we readily expect with members of our families, we have begun down a path where freedom is not likely to endure.

That a speech as extreme as Cuomo's in substance could be taken as pointing the party's way back to the mainstream showed something about how far the party had come. The Washington *Post* quoted an aide to House Speaker Tip O'Neill as saying that the so-called "super-delegates"—elected officials granted automatic delegate status—"played a moderating role that curbed ideological excesses" at the convention. If the effects of that "moderating role" were less than self-evident, it may have been because the Democratic Congressmen who made up the bulk of the super-delegates were themselves none too moderate. McGovernism had gained sway not only among the Democrats as a presidential party but also to a significant degree among Democrats in Congress.

Congressional Quarterly reported last year on the ideological transformation of the House Democratic caucus. "A decade ago," it said, "candidates for House Democratic leadership had to be careful not to sound too liberal. Today, they cannot afford to sound too conservative." In particular, observed *Congressional Quarterly*: "It is no longer considered radical or even adventurous for rank-and-file Democrats from Eastern and Midwestern districts to vote against authorizing money for defense. It is standard practice."

The House Democrats are not only out to cut defense, they are also out to reduce the presence of American power abroad. They clamored for the withdrawal of American marines from Lebanon. They succeeded in cutting off U.S. aid to the rebels in Nicaragua. They came within four votes of putting conditions on aid to El Salvador so stringent as almost surely to have led to a cessation of aid—and this was *after* the election of President Duarte. Northern Democrats voted 167 to 7 for the more stringent conditions which were defeated only because Jim Wright, at some risk to his standing in the caucus, led a majority of Southern Democrats in supporting an alternative amendment providing for more lenient conditions. The victory of the more lenient conditions so irked the Northern Democrats that by a margin of 129 to 44 they voted against final passage of the entire foreign-aid bill, even though the largest item in the bill was aid to Israel, which most of them favored.

The same symptoms of McGovernism were evident among House Democrats on racial issues. When the Reagan administration and the Congress reached a compromise in their dispute over the composition of the Civil Rights Commission, the House and Senate Democrats each got to appoint one commissioner. They used this authority respectively to reappoint Mary Frances Berry and Blandina Cardenas Ramirez, both advocates of racial quotas.

Dr. Berry's appointment was especially striking in light of the bizarre opinions voiced in her 1982 book, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

America. According to Dr. Berry, "Beginning in the 1960's, federal and local agencies supported . . . campaigns to eliminate black Americans" because the political climate made it "relatively easy for social planners to promote genocide." Conversely, referring back to the time of Stalin's rule, she said that "blacks remained cool to the Communists" because, "subjected to a massive barrage of propaganda from the American news media, few of them knew of Russia's constitutional safeguards for minorities, the extent of equal opportunity, or the equal provision of social services to its citizens." That views such as these did not disqualify someone from appointment as overseer of the nation's civil-rights practices was an indication of the state of things among congressional Democrats.

The appointment of Mary Berry was far from the only occasion on which some House Democrats showed themselves to have grown tolerant of the views of the far Left. The New York *Times* reported not long ago that House Speaker Tip O'Neill "depends on the activist nuns and priests to help shape his views on Central America," and commented that "the fervor of Mr. O'Neill's criticisms" of Reagan-administration policy toward the area is "grounded in . . . the theology of liberation" imbibed from these clerics. The *Times* mentioned the Maryknoll Order and its leader in Central America, Sister Peggy Healy, as among those with greatest influence on the Speaker. Yet many Maryknoll members, including Sister Healy, who worked for some years at the Washington Office on Latin America, are well known for their activism in support of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

In similar fashion, when Congressman Michael Barnes, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Latin America, led 33 House members in a suit last year against President Reagan contesting the pocket veto of a bill restricting aid to El Salvador, they retained as their lawyer Michael Ratner, the immediate past president of the National Lawyers Guild and an outspoken advocate of "solidarity" with Central American revolutionaries.

Or again, a handful of House Democrats have taken part in the activities within the United States of the World Peace Council, a barely disguised international Soviet-front organization whose president, Romesh Chandra, is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist party of India and a recipient of the USSR's Lenin Peace Prize. One of the Democrats in question is Congressman Ron Dellums, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Military Construction (a post he used, when the Bishop government was in power in Grenada, to prepare a report, which he first submitted to the Bishop government itself for editing, denying that the new airport then being built by Cubans in Grenada had any military purpose). Another Democrat who has worked with the World Peace Council is Don Edwards. Congressman Edwards chairs the House subcommittee that oversees the FBI, among whose responsibilities it is to keep tabs on groups like the World Peace Council.

As a final example, early last year Congressman Tom Harkin, since elected to the Senate from Iowa, asked a gathering of the radical Institute for Policy Studies, whose publications often speak favorably of Communist regimes and movements, to supply him with the names of individuals he could recommend for positions in the foreign-policy branches of a Mondale administration. Harkin could not have been unaware of IPS's stands, since he had been actively involved with the group for years.

More examples of this kind could be cited, but what do they show? Surely few if any Congressmen have become pro-Communist. But many House Democrats have become so fixated on combating what they see as the excesses of anti-Communist internationalism that they have grown undiscriminating about their alliances on the Left. This is one more measure of how McGovernized, at least on international issues, they have become.

POLITICIANS and commentators who share Mondale's views have understandably searched for explanations of his defeat that would not attribute it to voter rejection of these views. Some blame Mondale himself, saying that he was a poor candidate or a poor television performer. Yet Mondale won the presidential nomination in the primaries, beating the best his party had to offer. And though he may not have had any special flair for television, he was more articulate, better able to think on his feet, than most of the nominees from either party in the last several presidential races. He was knowledgeable on the issues, and he had no obvious quirks or skeletons in his closet.

Others blame voter "greed" for Reagan's popularity, pointing to polls showing high correlations between those who said they favored Reagan and those who believed that they would be personally better off if he were reelected. But surely this complaint is nothing more than the most ingenious new formulation of "new-class" contempt for the common man. Are people supposed to vote for the candidate under whom they expect to be worse off? As the noted survey analyst William Schneider wrote recently in the *New Republic*:

> Yes, people who felt better off voted for the incumbent and those who felt worse off voted for the challenger. But that was no more true this year than in 1980, or in 1976, or in any previous election. Moreover, voters' assessment of the nation's economy had a stronger and more consistent impact on their vote than their evaluation of their own personal well-being. People

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who felt that the country was beginning a long-term recovery voted for Reagan by a wide margin, no matter how they themselves had fared.

So much for the "greed" factor.

Some commentators attributed the victory to Reagan's personal popularity which, they said, had little to do with his policies. Yet a year into Reagan's first term, Patrick Caddell, interpreting the results of a poll taken for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, observed, "[Reagan] may be viewed as likable and genial and nice, but that doesn't translate into political popularity." According to Burns Roper in the Fall 1983 issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Reagan's job-approval rating has consistently been a little higher than his personal-approval rating. It has repeatedly been claimed that more voters approved of Reagan than agreed with his policies. But in the most recent issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, William Adams presents a list of important issues on which the number of voters who agreed with Reagan is even higher than the number who voted for him.

Nor is it true that the Republicans ran a particularly good campaign in 1984. The Republican convention, except for the speech by Jeane Kirkpatrick, fell flat. A little-known Hispanic woman was designated "keynote speaker," thereby undermining the Republicans' moral standing to criticize the Democrats on the quota issue. Barry Goldwater defended extremism and revealed an isolationist, unpatriotic streak by blaming the Democrats for all of America's modern wars. And Reagan gave one of the worst speeches of his Presidency. Accordingly, the polls showed that the convention failed to give the party the boost that conventions usually do.

Reagan was widely judged to have lost his first debate with Mondale, but was declared the winner of the second debate largely on the strength of his having dispelled the "age issue" with a clever one-liner. But as Morton Kondracke pointed out in the *New Republic*, Reagan's rambling and incoherent closing statement in the second debate did indeed raise more questions—or should have—than his earlier clever quip had answered.

The economic news remained good throughout the campaign, but not all the news favored the Republicans. The bombing of the U.S. embassy in Beirut and the story of the "primer" supplied by the CIA to the Nicaraguan rebels were breaks for the Democrats, and were not handled adroitly by Reagan and his colleagues.

But the Washington *Post* found that neither these events, nor the debates, nor anything that happened throughout the entire fall had any real impact on the race—that, in effect, the campaign was over the moment it began. Only 10 percent of the voters changed their minds during the course of the fall, the *Post* found, and these divided evenly between those who switched to Reagan and those who switched to Mondale. And *USA Today* reported that its monthly polling found astonishing continuity in voter response from February on.

With peace and prosperity in the land, Reagan might have been unbeatable in 1984, but his landslide was something the Democrats brought on themselves. It was, in popular vote, the biggest Republican victory since the 1920's, except of course for the year the Democrats nominated George McGovern. And it was the biggest electoral-vote landslide ever. The message for the Democrats was simple: what they were selling, the voters were not buying.

The Democrats were offering peace and fairness. But what the McGovernized Democrats mean by peace is military weakness and a retreat from global responsibility. The voters want peace—they fear war in Central America and they want arms control with the Soviets. But polls show that they fear Communism in Central America even more and they want firmness in dealing with the Soviets. They seem to understand better than the Democrats that strength and resolution are the best ways to attain peace.

What the McGovernized Democrats mean by "fairness" is more complex. In part it takes in economic policy, and here the voters are of two minds. To the extent that it means making the rich pay their fair share, and doubting that the Republicans will make them do so, the voters agree. To the extent that it means taxing the middle class to provide more benefits to the poor, the voters disagree.

But Democratic "fairness" also takes in something else—quotas and preferential treatment for women and accredited minorities. It means, in short, discrimination against white males. Indeed, the only way a white male can get equal treatment within the Democratic party today is to declare himself a homosexual or perhaps a devotee of some other unconventional "sexual preference." Of course the average voter does not know about the Fairness Commission, but he gets the message about what the Democrats mean by fairness. Can it be an accident that white males favored the Republicans by a margin of 68 to 31 percent?

What about the Democratic success in races for the House of Representatives? It was no doubt the result of many factors, one of which surely was that some voters who voted for Reagan also wanted some insurance against the danger that he would dismantle Social Security or cut other basic welfare programs beyond the point that they would like. In addition, congressional races are run largely on local issues and constituency services, and incumbents are hard to unseat. (Even so, in races in which both parties fielded candidates, Republicans received a combined total of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

54 percent of the vote, according to Democratic pollster William Hamilton.) It is also easier to fudge positions on national issues in a congressional or even a Senate race than in a presidential campaign. Congressman Harkin, one of the most McGovernite members of the House, ran one TV ad in his successful race for the Senate accusing his conservative Republican opponent of being a "big spender" and another ad which showed Harkin piloting a warplane and speaking of his military service. When a Harkin campaign consultant screened this ad for a post-election meeting of the American Association of Political Consultants, he commented jokingly: "That's what you do if you never vote for a defense bill."

IF THE McGovernization of the Democratic party is complete, is it irreversible? Surely there is no law that says it is. What with the Fairness Commission and all, the party seems poised to wander farther Left in opposition, as has the British Labor party. But perhaps the election of 1984 will prove more sobering than did the 1972 election, and perhaps the Henry Jackson wing will find new leaders and sources of strength. The greatest hope for de-McGovernization, ironically, would seem to lie in the regime of "reform" that McGovernism itself has imposed upon the party. There is no longer a party machine of any consequence, and the presidential nomination is decided almost entirely in the primaries. There is no inherent reason why a very different kind of Democrat—say, a Senator Sam Nunn—could not enter the primaries in 1988 and sweep the party before him.

What seems certain is that those Democrats who want to change their party's course will not succeed merely by arguing that its present direction is imprudent. After 1972, Democrats all realized, even if they would not admit, that McGovernism was imprudent, and this was the point on which its party opponents—save for a few intellectuals around CDM—focused. But the McGovernites argued that what they stood for was right and just. In the debates that ensued, the forces of conviction won out over the forces of prudence every time. If McGovernism is to be turned back today, it will only be by Democrats who have the conviction and the courage to challenge its substantive tenets.

To be sure, even if the party does not turn back from McGovernism, the exigencies of the business cycle and world events, or the ups and downs of the Republicans, could sooner or later bring the Democrats back to the White House. But whether or not the McGovernization of the Democrats is fatal to the party, it is bad for the country. At the heart of McGovernism lies a deep ambivalence about the value of the American experience, about the worth of American institutions. As Walter Mondale once put it, the United States "is not as compassionate, as understanding, as sensitive as we think we are. Our priorities are screwy; our priorities are pretty close to being obscene." That is why McGovernism is so reluctant to see American influence wielded in the world, and why it is so willing to discard the American principle of individual rights at home. It cannot be healthy for the body politic that one of our two major parties should be in thrall to such attitudes as these.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Conservatism After Reagan

Gregory A. Fossedal

HOWEVER one interprets the finer points of the 1984 election, it has left the Republican party in a kind of strange limbo—on the brink of, but not yet at, majority-party status. The press awarded Ronald Reagan a huge "personal" victory with no "mandate," and perhaps fairly so; the boldest policy statements coming out of the Reagan campaign seemed strongly to favor optimism, families, low inflation, and the Olympics. If the public delivered a clear message, it was probably a kind of negative mandate against the Democrats.

And yet 1984 did represent one more landslide victory for a GOP President. Indeed, if we go back to 1972, and if we except the Democratic win in 1976, attributable perhaps to the fallout of Watergate, an impressive string of Republican triumphs emerges. (Of all ballots cast for Congress nationwide, moreover, voters split virtually 50-50 between the two parties in 1984; the Democrats retain a substantial majority in the House largely because they have controlled state legislatures, and the legislatures in turn controlled reapportionment.) Whether the voters meant their support for Reagan to translate into specific support for a flat tax, or huge spending cuts, or urban enterprise zones, or any other particular policy, is fruitless to debate, and in any case will be decided within the coming months and years in Congress. Surely, however, the balance of political power—the correlation of forces, as the Soviets call it—has shifted marginally to Reagan's party.

This combination—a party of growing power yet still uncertain identity—has focused great attention on the battle of ideas within the GOP. In terms of policy, the fight between Reagan and Tip O'Neill may turn out to be less important than the battle between Jack Kemp and Robert Dole, between Lewis Lehrman and George Bush. Adding spice to this is the fact that Reagan is now in his final four years as President. Since he resolved few of the intramural disputes in his campaign, he will become a lame duck earlier than usual, forced to barter for support among Republicans who have a very clear idea where they would like their party to go. The battle for 1988 is already under way, and will have a critical influence on many of the policy debates between now and then.

To judge by the flurry of activity occasioned by the election, the war among the Republicans is vital and real. Virtually every conservative magazine and think tank—*National Review*, the Heritage Foundation, the *American Spectator*, and others—has produced a special edition or booklet outlining a "second-term agenda" for Reagan. Most began their work well before the election. (That such an exercise should even have been conducted suggests that there is no second-term agenda; why else put so much energy into defining it?) And four recent books, similarly published to coincide with the election, further testify to the ferment within the party: *The American Idea*, by the upstate New York Congressman and presidential hopeful, Jack Kemp; *Future 21*, edited by the New Right activist, Paul Weyrich; *Window of Opportunity*, by the Georgia Congressman, Newt Gingrich; and *The Establishment vs. the People*, by the direct-mail wizard and New Right spokesman, Richard Viguerie.*

Books setting a "new agenda" for a political party are of course common. Throughout the 60's and 70's, Republicans published several such manifestoes, including Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*, William F. Buckley's *Four Reforms*, and William Simon's *A Time for Truth*. And the phenomenon is hardly limited to Republicans. Not long after Reagan's election in 1980, books by Senators Paul Tsongas and Gary Hart, and a bevy of conferences and articles in the *Washington Monthly* and the *New Republic*, set out to unearth a new political species, the "neoliberal." Generally, however, such introspec-

GREGORY A. FOSSEDAL, here making his first appearance in COMMENTARY, is an editorial-page writer for the *Wall Street Journal* and co-author (with Daniel O. Graham) of *A Defense that Defends*.

* *The American Idea: Ending the Limits to Growth*, by Jack Kemp, American Studies Center, 355 pp., $8.95; *Future 21: Directions for America in the 21st Century*, by Lewis Lehrman, Patrick Buchanan, Burton Yale Pines, Patrick McGuigan, *et al.*, edited by Paul Weyrich, Devin-Adair, 248 pp., $16.95; *Window of Opportunity: A Blueprint for the Future*, by Newt Gingrich, St. Martin's, 272 pp., $14.95; *The Establishment vs. the People: Is a New Populist Revolt on the Way?*, by Richard Vigueric, Regnery-Gateway, 279 pp., $12.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion is reserved for those who have just lost several landslides, not won them. Seldom have we seen such fervent pamphleteering within the party which, by all appearances, is succeeding.

Regarding that intramural activity, two facts are striking. First, the debate so far has been peculiarly one-sided, limited to the New Right and (supply-side) conservatives. One finds no comparable book from the camp of George Bush, Howard Baker, Robert Dole, or any other leader in the conventional, centrist wing of the GOP. The truly liberal Republicans—Lowell Weicker, Charles McC. Mathias, Charles Percy—are equally silent. All this, ironically, at a time when the Republican party has, arguably, been expanding and broadening its ranks to include groups traditionally unwelcome.

To be sure, it is hard to generate the same zeal for moderation and compromise that one can for "bold ideas"—usually meaning purer ideology. But it is not that hard. Until recently, centrist and liberal Republicans were quite a lively crew, just as, on the Democratic side, are such activists and writers as Ben Wattenberg, Morton Kondracke, and other representatives of the Henry Jackson wing of the party. But the simple fact is that most of the intellectual energy in the Republican party is directed at moving it still farther down the road of supply-side economics and a hard-line foreign policy.

Second, for all the squabbling that is likely to take place in the next four years, there is wide agreement among GOP voters about the party's future. Party leaders may be split, but a poll of rank-and-file activists, local officeholders, and even most Congressmen—everyone, in short, below the level of Senate leader or top-echelon administration aide of the Nixon, Ford, and Reagan years—would establish near-consensus agreement on something like the platform outlined in all four of these books.

Thus, all four argue for some form of flat-tax reform, doing away with most existing exemptions but drastically lowering rates. All accept the welfare-state notion that, as Connie Marshner puts it in her introduction to the Weyrich book, "government does have some responsibility toward the poor." Indeed, all four are interested mainly in experimenting with new ways to meet that responsibility: education and job-training vouchers, enterprise zones, selling public housing to tenants with low-interest loans. Interestingly, however, all four books see the central drag on the economy today as monetary, not fiscal, and all four call for a gold standard as the way to bring down interest rates.

On defense and foreign policy, the books all naturally argue for a strong defense and support for our allies. But they consider such policies to be not nearly enough. Regarding defense, for example, they speak of the need for a substantial push to deploy "Star Wars" anti-missile systems. None is very enthusiastic about such programs as the MX missile or B-1 bomber. Although they advocate a substantial reform of the military, they see the unwieldy congressional committees and subsidized think tanks in Washington as the cause of military waste, not the solution to it.

Above all, the writers want a foreign-policy strategy "for defeating (not containing: note) the Soviets," to quote the introduction to *Future 21*. Kemp calls for a worldwide "democratic revolution," and Lehrman and Patrick Buchanan strike the same chord. Viguerie rejects a policy based on negotiation among international "elites," calling for broadcasts and other policies aimed at liberating whole populations.

THIS is hardly to suggest that there are no differences among the four books, including literary differences. Of the four, Kemp's is perhaps the easiest to read and is full of political insight. Weyrich and company are less eloquent but more rigorous, as might be expected from a collaborative effort by separate writers each of whom is working in his own area of expertise. By contrast, Viguerie and Gingrich take greater risks, unfortunately not altogether successfully.

Viguerie comes across mostly as a repackager. Although he argues cogently for his "new populism," by the time he is through distinguishing it from the brands sold by William Jennings Bryan, George Wallace, and Jimmy Carter, one is left wondering whether the exercise was necessary in the first place. Moreover, Viguerie spends too much of his time bashing "establishment elites," a term that seems to include roughly seven out of every ten people. Chapters appear on Big Business, Big Labor, Big Government, Big Law—just about everybody but Big Mailing List Fundraisers.

If Viguerie can appear negative, Newt Gingrich is a bit scattershot. When he is not theorizing about "populism in space," or correcting erroneous historical accounts of the Great Awakening and the Ming Dynasty (each gets several pages), he is dashing off lists of ideas for implementation in his Conservative Opportunity Society: eight ways to advance the high-tech revolution, five suggestions for a space policy to provide "enough romance and hope for the next several generations," and, in one chapter, a list of the eight major bureaucracies that need reforming—with five to ten suggestions for each, and a list of several reasons for some of the suggestions.

When he stays within sight of the ground, Gingrich makes some interesting observations, mostly having to do with his chief interest, high tech. For years, buzz words like "complexity" and "increasingly sophisticated technology" have been used as a kind of club to argue for more government intervention. The general notion is that the tidal force of computers, television, and nuclear

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

power can only be brought under control by the reins of state planning. Former Dartmouth College President John Kemeny, chairman of Jimmy Carter's Three Mile Island commission, summed up this idea by contending that in the face of modern technology, "Jeffersonian democracy cannot work" any more, and that "simplistic" institutions such as Congress will have to yield to panels of scientists and experts.

Gingrich goes beyond identifying all this as a cliché to point to a number of instances in which technology cuts precisely the opposite way. For example, if there are only 12 major television channels, and 15 people who want to broadcast, someone has to step in and decide who gets a license; the advent of cable television, however, has helped undermine the rationale for such intervention, and future communications advances will undermine it still further. Telephone service—once a natural monopoly, now naturally decentralized—is a parallel example. Gingrich paints a rather attractive picture of how technology can help shape our political future.

The trouble is that he lacks an appropriate policy. Or, to be more precise, he offers so many policies that the effect is confused and contradictory. He credits a great deal of past economic growth to correct policies of government subsidization: the Panama Canal, continental railroads, mail service, and so on. In this he resembles a neoliberal. But he also bewails the "bloated bureaucracy" that often results from such intervention; in this he is a true conservative. On one page he boasts of the achievements of American agriculture and aviation, both heavily subsidized; a few pages later he complains that in Europe, Common Market subsidies have caused powerful unions and industries, notably in agriculture and aviation, to "resist change." On the key political questions—how can we tell which policy will nurture an infant industry (rather than creating a boondoggle), and how do we prevent today's infant from becoming tomorrow's *enfant terrible*?—Gingrich offers little guidance. In the end one has the feeling that his plea for more money devoted to projects in space boils down to a mere aesthetic preference for satellites over food stamps.

One thing Gingrich accomplishes in his book (as he has also done in his effective attacks in Congress on Democratic foreign policy) is to make Jack Kemp and Lewis Lehrman seem, by contrast, mainstream. It took Richard Nixon to open up trade to China and to conclude a détente with the Soviet Union; inside the Republican party Newt Gingrich may be playing a similar role, causing other, equally aggressive conservatives to appear centrist and downright conciliatory.

Jack Kemp, however, really is a moderate politician, or at least a careful one, a mix of intellectual daring and tactical caution. Kemp is simultaneously the man who drew up the biggest tax cut in history, introduced enterprise-zone and gold-standard legislation in Congress, fought Ronald Reagan on the 1982 tax increase, opposed the bailout of the International Monetary Fund—and played Hamlet twice in 1980 and once in 1982, declining at the last minute to run for Senator, President, and Governor. This mixture of qualities is well conveyed by his book, which is essentially a collection of speeches and previously published articles.

Kemp selects his bold stands carefully. Once having settled on an issue, however, he clings tenaciously, building variations (and legislation) on a lasting theme. For example, Kemp today has at least three major proposals pending in Congress: his modified flat-tax bill (with Senator Robert Kasten), the enterprise-zone proposal, and a pair of bills to rein in the Federal Reserve by making its proceedings more public and to tie its monetary operations to a commodity standard, the price of gold. One can find the basics of these same proposals in Kemp's 1978 speech to the Economic Club of New York.

The biggest task for Kemp is to convince people that his ideas are anything other than right-wing, supply-side extremism. This is where Kemp stands out, even against such writers as Lehrman, Weyrich, and Viguerie. Kemp, like Mario Cuomo of the Democrats, manages to deliver a message that at once electrifies his own party and reaches out to the other. In Cuomo's case, that means talking about family and patriotism; for Kemp, as a Republican, it means talking about growth, opportunity, civil rights, and fairness.

What are the keys to Kemp's "common touch," as Irving Kristol calls it in his introduction to *The American Idea*? There are several, variously captured in the following passages from speeches on the welfare state:

> We need a safety net, but we need more than that. We need an opportunity ladder. . . . The true measure of a government's compassion is not how many people it can support on welfare, but how many people it can enable to support themselves.
>
> Capital is not just money. . . . Capital, in my view, is productive capability and thus exists in the minds, hands, and creativity of the people—in the inner city and throughout the country. [Those who attack enterprise zones as a solution to urban decay] miss the point of how quickly such human capital can be mobilized in our inner cities. They miss how rapidly, in an entrepreneurial economy, people can move up.

One aspect of Kemp's personality that shines through here is a sincere sympathy for people's condition—sympathy not in the sense of having "compassion" or "feelings" about or at them, but in being able to discern what they feel, to put

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

himself in their place. Really, Kemp suggests, the politician has to sense where people want to go, what they want out of life, better than they themselves might be able to express it. Jude Wanniski, a member of Kemp's braintrust, illustrates the point well when he asks "how people would have responded to a poll, say in 1950, asking whether they would pay $5 for a little plastic disc you spin through the air and play tricks with on the beach." Political leadership consists partly in understanding that people want a "frisbee" even before one exists, and then doing something about it.

Kemp's sense of humor, his ability to simplify and crystallize, and his command of simple stories and idiom make him (like Reagan) an effective communicator. He is also what Wanniski calls "an includer." Where Gingrich talks about the Conservative Opportunity Society, Kemp refers to the American Opportunity Society. Where Viguerie notes the sinister fact that Big Labor and Big Business share many interests, Kemp points to the same shared interest as evidence "that we don't live in a zero-sum society. Labor and capital are allies, not enemies." Like Viguerie, Weyrich, and Gingrich, Kemp calls himself a "populist," but Kemp manages to make this term sound friendlier than the others do. Maybe that is why his name, and his rhetoric, pervade the other three books.

INTERESTINGLY enough, all four of the books under consideration give higher priority to the economy, foreign policy, and defense than to abortion, school prayer, and the family. Does this mean that the social issues are dead in the Republican party? Probably not. It does mean, however, that the advocacy of social issues by the New Right has been generally misunderstood.

Weyrich and Viguerie both try, with varying degrees of success, to correct what they see as widespread confusion concerning their intentions. To most of us, the term "New Right" may mean more or less the same as "far Right" or "fundamentalist Right." But these New Right spokesmen view their distinguishing feature as having less to do with substantive positions, or with ideology, than with tactical expertise. Morton Blackwell, Reagan's liaison with the New Right until 1984, has explained the evolution of the movement as follows:

> Most of us were born out of the Goldwater campaign in the 1960's, meaning that we were very conservative, but also meaning that we understood something about defeat. For years, what we would do is hold conferences, where everyone would sit around and talk about how bad the liberals were. At a really exciting conference, someone might come up with some new conservative policies. But the only thing that happened was that everyone got all charged up for a few days and then went home with nothing to do.

By the early 1970's, as Blackwell tells it, the New Right decided to channel its energy in another direction: namely, figuring out how to translate ideology into political victory. What he and others discovered was a whole range of emerging technologies and tactics, from direct-mail fundraising to negative advertising. Blackwell himself developed a series of weekend seminars to train people who were already committed to right-wing causes how to run an effective volunteer operation, how to build a youth and campus organization, and so on. Irving Kristol once described his own personal orientation as, "got a problem, start a magazine." To Blackwell and company, the phrase could be altered to, "got a problem, start a mailing list." Explains Blackwell: "I just found it was easier to take someone who agreed with me and coach him on the tactics of victory than it was to convert a skilled technician from liberalism to conservatism."

This history may well account for the special animus one encounters in Viguerie's and Weyrich's books against the Republican "pragmatists," White House men like James Baker and Richard Darman whom the New Right views not only as sinister but as not very pragmatic. To the New Right, Republican centrism is what kept the GOP a minority party from 1932 on; call Baker a "shrewd tactician" in this group and they will point out that until 1980 Baker lost every campaign he was connected with.

How, then, do these New Right tacticians see the social issues? Both Viguerie and Weyrich care deeply about them; but in their books they make it clear that when a member of the New Right says "social issue," or "moral issue," he means just about any issue. Soviet aggression? "That is a moral issue," Viguerie writes. Inefficient welfare programs? "A social issue," writes Weyrich. And so on.

As for the truly divisive questions like abortion, the main point made by the tacticians of the New Right in their dispute with moderate Republicans is that talk of the evil of abortion does not necessarily lead to loss of support for the GOP. If anything, the New Right argues, it adds to the coalition, bringing in ethnic voters otherwise inclined to vote Democratic.

Thus, if William Safire should ask, as he did in the New York *Times* this fall, how one can continue to support a Reagan determined to pursue the New Right's social agenda, Richard Viguerie might respond by pointing to the way the Democratic party managed to keep both blacks and Southern segregationists in its fold right up to the 1960's. What Viguerie and his colleagues seem to be asking, in effect, is that the likes of Safire

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

refrain from bashing the New Right in return for the support Viguerie and his legions can muster on issues Safire feels more strongly about, such as a strong U.S. military. The glue that held Reagan's coalition together from 1980 to 1984 was precisely the knowledge, on the part of people like Safire, that people like Viguerie were not in the near future going to have their way on abortion, school prayer, and similar issues.

On the evidence of Viguerie's and Weyrich's books, they understand this tacit arrangement very well. The evidence lies not so much in what they say as in what they do not say. They do not say they will refuse to support a candidate who cannot pass a human-life amendment in four or five years. Unlike some one-issue opponents of abortion, they do not say that they would vote for a Communist pro-life candidate over a free-enterprise, anti-Soviet, pro-choice candidate. In short, although they have no intention of surrendering their beliefs, or their overall vision of the Republican future, they are more concerned with building and maintaining coalitions than with policy arguments *per se*.

WHATEVER their individual merits or deficiencies, these books offer a kind of leading indicator of where one of America's major parties is headed. Just after the GOP convention last summer, *Time* magazine tried to chart the factions within Republican politics by breaking them into five: the liberals, the pragmatists, the supply-side Young Turks, the Eastern-establishment Right, and the New Right. A more complete analysis might have to allow for several subdivisions within each category. From 1980 to 1984, and notwithstanding some rancor, this motley crew came together to support Ronald Reagan and his program, and on election day 1984 gave him their wholehearted support once more. Keeping the crew in line *after* Reagan will be no mean feat, but in these books, the conservative wing of the party, at least, has given some sign of how it intends to go about the effort.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Delusions of Soviet Weakness

Edward N. Luttwak

IN RECENT years, entire books have appeared which argue that the Soviet armed forces are much weaker than they seem. Citing refugee accounts or personal experience, they depict the pervasive technical incompetence, drunkenness, corruption, and bleak apathy of officers and men. Drunken officers and faked inspections, Turkic conscripts who cannot understand orders in Russian drowning in botched river-crossing tests, the harsh lives of ill-fed, ill-housed, and virtually unpaid Soviet conscripts, and a pervasive lack of adequate training fill these accounts.

It is odd how all these stories (each true, no doubt) contrast with the daily evidence of the routine operations of the Soviet armed forces. Merely keeping its warships seaworthy and supplied in distant and often stormy waters demands a great deal of discipline and expertise from the officers and men of the Soviet navy. Even more skill is needed to carry out successfully the missile launches and gunnery trials that are also part of the Soviet naval routine. Likewise, we have the evidence of Soviet air operations; they too require a great deal of competence, both in the daily training sorties of the fighters and in the long-range flights of the bombers and transports.

Nor can the Soviet army fake all the disciplined maintenance, tight planning, and skills needed to assemble, move, and operate the many thousands of complicated armored vehicles, hundreds of helicopters, and countless smaller weapons in its exercises. It only takes a little drunken inattention or technical incompetence, or mere apathy by maintenance crews, to cause an aircraft to crash; a little more can sink a ship; and the delicate gear box of a battle tank is easily wrecked.

It is true that at fairly regular intervals we learn of spectacular failures in the upkeep of the Soviet armed forces. Breakdowns at sea lead to much photography of submarines adrift in the ocean and to much speculation over possible radiation leaks. Word of plane crashes reaches us now and then, and most recently there was solid evidence of huge explosions in the weapon stores of the Northern Fleet in the Kola peninsula. It is perfectly probable that Soviet standards of maintenance are lower than those of the United States, but the difference is scarcely of dramatic consequence. All armed forces, including those of the United States, have their collisions, their air crashes, their catastrophic breakdowns. The Soviet armed forces may well have more than their share. Yet it was never by superior efficiency that first Russia and then the Soviet Union became so very powerful, but rather by a combination of numbers, persistent strategies, and a modest technical adequacy.

When the actual record of war is assessed, not from official accounts but from the testimony of those who were there, it becomes quite clear that battles are not won by perfection but rather by the supremacy of forces that are 5-percent effective over forces that are 2-percent effective. In peacetime, when all the frictions of war are absent, when there is no enemy ready to thwart every enterprise, effectiveness may rise to dizzy levels of 50 or 60 percent—which means, of course, that filling in the wrong form, posting to the wrong place, supplying the wrong replacement parts, assigning the wrong training times, selecting the wrong officers, and other kinds of errors are merely normal. Matters cannot be otherwise, because military organizations are much larger than the manageable groupings of civilian life that set our standards of competence; and because their many intricate tasks must be performed not by life-career specialists like those who run factories, hospitals, symphony orchestras, and even government offices, but by transients who are briefly trained—short-service conscripts in the case of the Soviet armed forces.

Actual alcoholism, in the severe, clinical sense, is now epidemic in the Soviet Union, where so many lead bleak lives, no longer alleviated by the once vibrant hope of a fast-approaching better future. So drunkenness is no doubt pervasive in the Soviet armed forces. But Russians have always been great drinkers. Drunk they defeated Napoleon, and drunk again they defeated Hitler's

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK is senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University. A professional defense consultant, he has written widely on strategic and military issues. His books include *The Strategic Balance, The U.S.-USSR Nuclear Weapons Balance,* and *Strategy and Politics.* The present article is adapted from his new book, *The Pentagon and the Art of War: The Question of Military Reform,* to be published by Simon & Schuster in February. Copyright © 1984 by Edward N. Luttwak.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

armies and advanced all the way to Berlin. All these stories of corruption are also undoubtedly authentic. But no great military empire is likely to be undone by generals who procure villas through corrupt dealings, nor by sergeants who take the odd ruble off a conscript; Anglo-Saxon morality makes much of these things, history much less. Corruption in the higher ranks can demoralize the troops—but not if it is accepted as a normal part of life.

On the question of loyalty, even less need be said. Should the Soviet Union start a war, only to experience a series of swift defeats, it is perfectly possible that mutinies would follow against the Kremlin's oppressive and most unjust rule. But if the initial war operations were successful, it would be foolish to expect that private disloyalty would emerge to undo victory and disintegrate the armed forces. There will always be a small minority of lonely heroes with the inner resources to act against the entire power of the world's largest and most complete dictatorship. The rest of us weaker souls will stay in the safety of the crowd—and the crowd will not rebel against a uniquely pervasive police system at the very time when successful war is adding to its prestige, and the laws of war are making its sanctions more terrible.

Only one claim can be allowed: it is true that the ethnic composition of the Soviet population is changing, with non-Russians making up an increasing proportion of the total. This creates problems of loyalty that are unknown in the United States, because in the Soviet Union, distinct nationalities persist with their own languages, ethnic sentiments, and sometimes strong antagonism to the Russian master-people. As the proportion of non-Russian conscripts increases, language problems also increase, and because many of these conscripts come from backward nationalities, they are harder to train in modern military skills, even if they do know the Russian language. There is also a greater potential for ethnic strife, already manifest in barrack-room fights.

In the *very* long run it is possible and even likely that the non-Russians, or at least the larger non-European peoples—the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tadzhiks, and so on—will demand full national independence and struggle for it, eventually causing the dissolution of the Soviet empire, which is the last survivor of the European empires that dominated much of the entire world until a generation ago. Demography is indeed a powerful and relentless force, but slow in effect. In 1970, out of a total Soviet population of 242 million, 74 percent was Slavic and 53 percent actually Russian. (Some of the fiercest antagonisms are between Russians and other Slavs.) In that year, there were 35 million people of Muslim origin (mostly Turkic), just under 15 percent of the Soviet total. By the year 2000 it is projected that the Muslims will account for more than a fifth (21-25 percent) of the total population of 300 million, with Russians at 47 percent and all Slavs at 65 percent. Naturally the change will be felt sooner and more strongly in the younger groups of military age. For example, out of the 2.1 million males projected to be at the conscription age of eighteen in 1985, the non-Slavs will account for more than 35 percent, and quite a few of them will not know enough Russian to obtain the full benefit of training.

But of course the armed forces of a multinational empire know a thing or two about managing diverse nationalities. Those with a high percentage of dissidents, such as the Estonians, Western Ukrainians, and Jews, can be safely employed in military-construction battalions, which are virtually unarmed, or in other support units far from combat; those with many illiterates or conscripts whose Russian is poor, such as the Kirghiz, Turkmen, and Tadzhiks, can be placed in the undemanding mechanized infantry of second-line divisions. There are problems, but they remain quite manageable. The real problem of national self-assertion is for the distant future.

SO FAR nothing precise has been said about the most obvious attribute of the Soviet armed forces: their sheer numerical strength. The gross totals are well known, and mean little. As against the 30 large divisions of the U.S. army and marine corps, active and reserve, the Soviet army has 194 divisions, smaller by a third on average but just as heavily armed. One-third are fully manned, one-third are half and half, and the rest are mostly manned by reservists —but all Soviet divisions are fully equipped, even if not with the latest and best, and all have a full-time professional cadre, even when their line units are manned by reservists. The Soviet tactical air force has some 6,000 strike aircraft, fighters, and fighter-bombers, less advanced on average but also of more recent vintage than the 5,600 or so equivalent aircraft of the U.S. air force, navy, and marines. Another 1,250 interceptor-fighters serve in the territorial air defenses (along with more than 9,600 anti-aircraft missiles), and the Soviet navy's land-based aviation also includes some fighter-class aircraft.

For the Soviet navy, one ship list prepared by the U.S. navy shows 1,324 "surface combatants," as against its own 285 surface warships; 367 submarines, as against 99; and 770 auxiliaries, as against its own 105 logistic and support ships. The figures are of course grossly inflated, but even the most sober count that excludes the old, the inactive, and the small would still list 290 major Soviet surface warships, 119 nuclear and 157 diesel-attack submarines, and 360 land-based naval bombers, of which 100 are modern machines of transoceanic range.

No true military balance is made of mere lists, however. The place and the time, the allies present on each side, and the circumstances of the nation and of the particular theater of war will govern what can be achieved, and indeed what

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forces can be deployed at all. No estimate can be made for expeditionary ventures in undefined theaters of hypothetical war—except to say that the power of the Soviet military wanes drastically as the distance from the Soviet Union increases, much more so than does that of the American forces, which are far better equipped to reach and fight in faraway places. But we can make rather solid estimates for the continental theaters of war directly adjacent to the Soviet Union—in Europe, the Middle East, and northeast Asia. The results are grim.

In the five possible war theaters of the North Atlantic alliance—northern Norway, the "central" front in Germany, northeast Italy, the Thrace frontier of Greece and Turkey with Bulgaria, and the Turkish border with the Soviet Union in remote eastern Anatolia—it is clear that the ground forces of both the United States and its allies, those already deployed in peacetime and those to be mobilized, would be outnumbered, outgunned, or both. By adding absolutely everything on the books—including Turkish infantry and the American National Guard, in addition to the manned forces actually in place—the total number of alliance divisions for the five theaters rises to 144, as against a combined Warsaw Pact total of 170. That is scarcely a catastrophic imbalance, and the situation looks even easier for the alliance when we recall that the Warsaw Pact total includes the divisions of rebellious Poland, unwilling Hungary, restive Czechoslovakia, doubtful East Germany, and uncooperative Rumania.

If we make a somewhat finer comparison, however, including only tank and mechanized divisions on the alliance side, thus removing a mass of ill-armed and immobile infantry forces of low military value, while at the same time eliminating *all* the non-Soviet forces of the Warsaw Pact, 80 divisions of the alliance remain, while the Soviet army alone has 109—*after* leaving 78 Soviet divisions to face the Chinese border, occupy Afghanistan, and control Iran's long border. These 109 Soviet divisions are smaller than the Western divisions, but no longer by much, and they do belong to one army under one central authority, whereas the Western total is split among the armies of the United States, Canada, Britain, Norway, Denmark, West Germany, Holland, France, Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Turkey—and the French divisions are not under alliance command and not necessarily available, the Greek divisions are of uncertain allegiance, and the American reserve forces must first be mobilized, then filled out and updated in training, then transported across the ocean.

If we include the non-mechanized forces of high military value (such as the American and Soviet airborne divisions), and exclude alliance forces not rapidly available for reinforcement, the realistic alliance count is on the order of 56 divisions, the Soviet, 114.

The situation in the air over the European fronts is similar: by the fullest count, the Soviet Union alone could muster 4,700 fighters, fighter-bombers, and interceptors, without reinforcement from other theaters; the Western air forces in Europe hold a total of 3,045, of which not more than two-thirds can be considered modern, including all the 594 American fighters and fighter-bombers.

To consider the military balance in the Persian Gulf, with Iran as the possible theater of war, no computation is even needed: against a maximum of four or five American divisions that could eventually be deployed with great difficulties and greater risk, the Soviet Union could send 20 with great ease.

On the last of the "continental" fronts, which cuts across the peninsula of Korea—where sudden war is all too possible, but where a large Soviet intervention now seems most unlikely—it is the Korean forces on both sides that now make the balance. But should Moscow choose to do so, it could add much more to the North Korean strength than the United States could add to that of South Korea.

Thus on every possible major front we encounter the powerful arithmetic of the Soviet army. By integrating reserves with active units and providing full equipment, the Soviet army is a very effective producer of armor-mechanized divisions. Not at all suited for overseas expeditions, dependent on rail transport for large movements between the different fronts separated by several thousand miles, these divisions are nevertheless powerful instruments of offensive war wherever the Soviet Union may seek to enlarge its empire.

With Western air power now offset to a large degree by Soviet air defenses, and with naval power only relevant in the less critical theaters remote from Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, the ground forces are the basic currency of East-West strategy. Because of the Soviet Union's energetic countering efforts, its advantage in ground forces can no longer be offset by Western strengths in other forms of military power, including (as we shall see later) nuclear.

THE combat value of the mass of the Soviet armed forces remains untested by the terrible urgencies of war. But it is possible to estimate their organizational, operational, and tactical competence—if not their fighting spirit—by observing exercises, which show quite clearly that the Soviet armed forces can now execute complicated military operations on a very large scale.

Specifically, we know that the Soviet army can assemble, supply, and send out its long columns of armor and considerable artillery to defeat enemy fronts, not in a steamroller action of costly head-on attacks, as in the past, but rather in quick probes—to find gaps and weak sectors, and to follow with fast-paced penetrations into the rear

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to achieve great encirclements; to overrun forward air bases, depots, and command centers; to "hug" cities so that tactical nuclear attacks against Soviet advancing forces would hit allied population centers (and would thus be inhibited); and to seize large extents of territory in so doing.

At the same time, raiding forces of the airborne divisions, of the special helicopter-assault brigades, of the "diversionary" and commando units of both military and civilian intelligence can fly into, parachute into, or infiltrate the deep rear in order to seize nuclear-weapons storage sites, attack headquarters and communications centers, sabotage aircraft in their hangars and fire across crowded runways, ambush road convoys, and spread havoc by their mere presence—and by the inevitable tide of false reports about their doings and undoings.

We know that the Soviet air force has enough aircraft, enough bases, and enough quality in men and machines to deny air supremacy to whatever Western air forces it might meet in Europe, the Persian Gulf, or East Asia. Its fighter-interceptors, along with their anti-aircraft defenses, could keep Western air forces from doing much harm to the Soviet army; its long-range strike fighters could reach and bomb Western airfields even in the deepest rear, and its fighter-bombers and ground-attack aircraft could disrupt if not seriously reduce Western ground forces. In theory, Western air forces could eventually prevail in the contest for air supremacy—if the Soviet ground forces had not by then overrun their airfields. One thing is certain: Western air power can give little help to the ground forces in the first days of a war—precisely when air support would be needed most urgently.

We know that the Soviet navy can send out its aircraft, group its ships, and deploy its attack submarines in a concerted worldwide action to stage simultaneous missile strikes on American carrier task forces at sea, certainly in the Indian Ocean, eastern Mediterranean, and northeast Pacific, and possibly in the Atlantic and eastern Pacific as well. Though lacking the floating air power that remains the costly centerpiece of the American navy, the Soviet Union can nevertheless soberly estimate that *if* it attacked first, it could destroy the main fighting strength of the American navy actually at sea. In any event, Soviet attack submarines would endanger the sea connection between the United States and American forces overseas.

So far, not a word has been said about the entire subject of Soviet nuclear weapons. This separation and implied downgrading of the matter corresponds to the strategic logic of the Soviet position against the West. Moscow's protestations of reluctance to use nuclear weapons against the West (China is another matter) may be perfectly sincere. Just as the invader is always peaceful—for he seeks only to advance and not to fight, while it is his victim who causes war by resisting—so the Soviet Union has every reason to avoid nuclear war, because it is now stronger than the West in non-nuclear military forces. Fully able to invade Europe, Iran, or Korea without having to use nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union now needs its nuclear weapons mainly to neutralize the nuclear deterrence of the United States, Britain, and France. Just as it is always the victim who must make war to resist aggression, so the West must rely on the fear of nuclear war to obtain security, by threatening nuclear attacks against invading Soviet forces if they cannot be stopped by non-nuclear means.

To deter such "tactical" attacks—that is, to inhibit the first level of the Western nuclear deterrent in order to restore the full value of its armies for intimidation or actual invasion—the Soviet Union has built up its own "tactical" nuclear forces, in the form of artillery shells, rockets, short-range missiles, and bombs for fighter-class aircraft and strike bombers. The Soviet Union can therefore reply in kind should its invading armies have their victories spoiled by nuclear attacks.

If the West begins to strike at invading Soviet columns with tactical nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union can, in a simple military calculation, use its own tactical nuclear weapons to blast open paths through the alliance front, so that even badly reduced and shocked invasion columns can continue to advance, eventually to reach and "hug" the cities—thereby forcing the alliance to stop its nuclear attacks. In the far more meaningful political calculation, the mere existence of large and very powerful Soviet tactical nuclear forces should inhibit to some extent any Western use of the same weapons.

But the alliance has a most significant advantage that arises from its purely defensive character: at this first level, the entire onus of beginning a war rests on the Soviet Union; it is by *its* decision that the movement of the armies would begin; it is by *its* decision that the invasion of Western territory would continue so that tactical nuclear weapons would be used against its forces, raising the conflict to the second level. Hence the Soviet tactical nuclear forces are not sufficient to dissuade Western use of the same weapons. The Soviets could only use them to achieve physical results (blasting gaps through the front) that would not begin to remedy the catastrophic deterioration of their position from a successful non-nuclear invasion to a nuclear conflict in which no good result could be achieved.

Therefore, to inhibit Western tactical nuclear forces much more powerfully, the Soviet Union maintains another category of nuclear weapons of longer ("intermediate") range, which threaten the cities of Europe, as well as large military targets in the deep rear, such as air bases. At present, the celebrated SS-20 ballistic missile is the main weapon in this category, which also includes Soviet strike aircraft such as the Su-24 ("Fencer"). With these weapons the interaction between So-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

viet and Western military power reaches its third level.

OF LATE, the alliance has begun to deploy intermediate-range cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in Britain, West Germany, and Italy (more are to be deployed in Belgium and Holland). Because they are widely regarded as an entirely different category of weapons, they *are* different politically: the huge controversy surrounding their deployment may enable the cruise and Pershing-2 missiles to have a counter-intimidation impact since public opinion views them as an answer to the SS-20's. To that extent, they are *politically* distinct from the far more abundant aircraft bombs and all the other nuclear weapons officially described as tactical. In addition, the new missiles may be more reliable in reaching their targets than strike aircraft with nuclear bombs.

But *strategically* the cruise and Pershing-2 missiles are *not* different from the tactical nuclear weapons of the alliance: they too serve to neutralize the non-nuclear strength of the Soviet army, and they too are neutralized in turn by the Soviet nuclear counterthreat against the cities of the alliance. As a matter of physical fact, the cruise and Pershing-2 missiles do not threaten anything not already threatened by alliance weapons classified as tactical; specifically, they do not threaten Soviet cities any more than the tactical nuclear bombs of longer-ranged alliance strike aircraft. Both those aircraft and the new missiles could reach cities in the western part of the Soviet Union; neither is meant to be used against those cities; for both, the relevant targets are Soviet military forces and their bases and command centers.

To neutralize the Soviet third-level threat against the alliance cities in Europe, the new missiles would have to counterthreaten Soviet cities with an equal certainty of complete destruction; because of their vulnerability and range limits, the new missiles cannot do that. Hence the new missiles cannot take the strategic interaction to a fourth level, where the Soviet invasion potential is once again neutralized. The third level thus leaves the Soviet Union in control of the situation, because with or without the cruise and Pershing-2 missiles, the alliance can protect its frontal defenses only at the risk of provoking Soviet nuclear attacks against the cities that those same frontal forces are supposed to protect.

It takes a fourth level to restore a war-avoiding balance, in which this Soviet third-level nuclear threat is itself deterred by American intercontinental nuclear forces capable of inflicting catastrophic destruction on the Soviet Union. Then the Western "tactical" nuclear forces can once again deter a Soviet (non-nuclear) invasion, and the Soviet Union's invasion potential yields neither war options nor the power to intimidate the European allies of the United States.

The Soviet response would be to seek a fifth level of strategic interaction, where the American deterrent would be neutralized by the threat of destroying the intercontinental nuclear force if any were used against Soviet military forces, and American cities if any Soviet cities were destroyed. If the United States government would withdraw its threat of a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union in response to a Soviet attack on European cities, or if American intercontinental nuclear forces could not plausibly threaten the Soviet Union, the strategic interaction would revert to the third level, in which the Soviet threat against the cities of the allies inhibits the West from using its tactical nuclear forces, thus making the world safe for the Soviet army.

ONE hears it said endlessly that the competition between American and Soviet intercontinental nuclear forces is not only costly and dangerous but also futile, because each side can already destroy the population of the other "many times over." That, however, is a vulgar misunderstanding. It is not to destroy the few hundred cities and larger towns of each side—easy targets neither protected nor concealed—that intercontinental nuclear forces continue to be developed. The purpose is not to threaten cities and towns already abundantly threatened, to "overkill" populations, but rather to threaten the intercontinental nuclear forces themselves: the missiles in their fortified housings, the bomber bases and missile-submarine ports, and the centers of military command and communication for all those forces. Thus there are several thousand targets, as opposed to a few hundred cities and towns, and many of those targets can only be destroyed by very accurate warheads.

At the fifth level of interaction, each side strives to reduce the nuclear-attack strength of the other, by defenses when possible (notably anti-aircraft, against the bombers), but mainly by offensive weapons accurate enough to destroy the weapons of the other side. And it is not enough to be able to threaten the destruction of the weapons: to make the threat effective it is also necessary to demonstrate the ability to destroy them without at the same time destroying the nearby population centers. For if that happens, then all the strategy and all rational purposes come to an end, as the victim will respond by launching his surviving weapons (there will always be some, perhaps many) against the cities of the attacker. For the United States, the competition at this point is driven by the goal of keeping the strategic interaction at the fourth level, where the Soviet army stands deterred; for the Soviet Union, the goal is to reach the fifth level, where American nuclear deterrence is itself deterred.

Because of the goals now pursued, contrary to widespread belief, intercontinental nuclear weapons are steadily becoming *less* destructive in gross explosive power. The goal of each side is to make

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

its forces more accurate and more controllable so that they can destroy small and well-protected targets, and no more. During the 1960's, the United States was still producing weapons of 5 and 9 megatons, while the Soviet Union was producing 20-megaton warheads; nowadays, most new American warheads have yields of less than half a megaton, while most Soviet warheads are below one megaton. As new weapons replace old, the total destructive power of the two intercontinental nuclear arsenals is steadily declining. (A "freeze," incidentally, would put an end to that process.)

THE state of the American-Soviet intercontinental nuclear balance is the basic index, the Dow-Jones, of world politics. Directly or through sometimes subtle hopes and fears it shapes much of what American and Soviet leaders feel free to do in world affairs. Two things are quite obvious about the current intercontinental nuclear balance. Both sides can easily destroy the cities and larger towns of the other. And neither can launch an all-out strike that would fully disarm the other's weapons. The competition is now between these two extremes, as each side seeks to protect as many of its weapons as possible while threatening the other's weapons.

Although the United States is by no means inferior across the board, category by category, it is impossible to extract an optimistic estimate from the numbers. There are 1,398 Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles in underground housings, as against 1,000 American Minuteman missiles; some of the latter have been modernized and others have not, but the Soviet missiles are much larger, with many more warheads (almost 6,000 versus 2,100), which are no longer less accurate than their American counterparts (as was the case till quite recently). No expert disputes the accuracy and reliability of the more modern Soviet ballistic missiles—the four-warhead SS-17 (150 in service), the huge SS-18, with as many as ten warheads (308 in service), and the slightly less modern but more abundant six-warhead SS-19 (330 in service). The combined Soviet force clearly outmatches the 450 one-warhead Minuteman 2's and 550 three-warhead Minuteman 3's. Specifically, the Soviet land-based missiles could now destroy all but a fraction of their American counterparts, while the latter could not hope to do the same to the Soviet force.

The remaining defect of the Soviet land-based ballistic-missile force is that its warheads are not yet small enough to make the threat of a "clean" disarming strike believable. (The smallest warheads are of half-megaton size, and some are almost a full megaton.) The Soviet Union is now developing an entire new group of land-based ballistic missiles: undoubtedly they will be more accurate, and their warheads will be smaller. The new American MX missiles now in production are also meant to be more accurate, although their original purpose was greater survivability, which is dubious, since they will be placed inside fixed housings, though they were built for mobility.

The Soviet force of submarine-carried ballistic missiles is also much larger than the American, with 980 missiles as opposed to 640, but the quality difference is still so great that the American force remains superior. In the first place, most Soviet submarine-launched missiles are still one-warhead weapons, while their American counterparts have multiple warheads. As a result, the Soviet Union has fewer than 1,000 separate warheads in its submarine force, as against more than 5,000 (much smaller) American warheads.

A greater defect in a force that is, or should be, the ultimate strategic reserve, the best-protected of all in the intercontinental category, is the fact that all the Soviet submarines, except perhaps the very latest, are much noisier and thus more easily detected than their American counterparts* This is all the more striking because the Soviet submarines are much newer on average: between 1974 and 1984 the Soviet Union built 35 Delta class submarines and one huge Typhoon, as against just four bigger still Ohio-class submarines built by the United States. On the other hand, the latest Soviet submarine-launched missile, the SS-N-20, has such a long range (8,300 kilometers) that it can reach most targets without requiring the submarine carrying it to leave safe waters near the Soviet northern coasts.

Throughout the long years of strategic competition, the Soviet force of intercontinental bombers remained much smaller, and its aircraft much inferior, though this may be about to change. In the latest count, the 297 American bombers, mostly ancient but much modernized B-52's, can be compared to a total of 273 Soviet bombers, including roughly 130 Backfires that are modern and supersonic, but not quite sufficient in range (5,500 kilometers), as well as a greater number of Tu-95's, an aircraft as old as the B-52 but much inferior in every way. Only recently has the Soviet Union started producing a true modern intercontinental bomber, the Blackjack, which is externally similar to the new American B-15, and is destined to be electronically less advanced but also much faster.

For all their technical inferiority, Soviet bombers are still formidable, simply because the United States has very weak air defenses. While American bombers would have to contend with 1,250 Soviet interceptor-fighters and almost 10,000 anti-aircraft missiles to reach their targets, Soviet bombers would virtually have a free ride against 90 air force and 180 Air National Guard interceptors, and not a single missile.

* Among the 80 Soviet ballistic-missile submarines in service, some 22 are ancient diesel and early vintage nuclear boats that have every right to be noisy, but these account for fewer than 60 of the 980 missile tubes. The bulk of the force should be much less noisy than it is, raising some interesting questions about Soviet design, or perhaps strategy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Soviet Union's destruction of the Korean airliner (flight KAL 007), on September 1, 1983, has been interpreted by some as proof of the incompetence of Soviet territorial air defenses. In one version, which assumes that the attack was made in error, the Soviet radar network is judged grossly incompetent for having failed to distinguish between KAL 007 and the very much smaller RC-135 electronic-reconnaissance aircraft (supposedly the intended victim). In a second version the mere fact that KAL 007 was not actually shot down until two-and-one-half hours after it first entered Soviet airspace over the Kamchatka peninsula is treated as a failure of the system, regardless of whether the aircraft was correctly identified.

These interpretations illustrate very well the difficulty of making operational judgments in a vacuum; the mere fact that the Korean airliner *was* found and reached by a Soviet fighter, that a missile was launched correctly, that it detonated and destroyed a large aircraft is simply taken for granted, as if these were easy things. And indeed they should be for any air-defense system at war, operating day in and day out, with all the habits of combat operations. But on September 1, 1983, until KAL 007 arrived on the scene, Soviet air defenses were at peace, as they have been for almost forty years. To monitor the air space closely, to have the fighters ready at the end of the runway, to have pilots find the target, to have missiles fully operational—to have all this when the action suddenly starts after decades of inaction is not easy at all. The interception of KAL 007 should be compared to the non-interception by American air defenses of more than one Cuban airliner that violated U.S. flight corridors on the Havana-Mexico City route.

Even a delay of two-and-one-half hours would not be significant. But as it happens, the delay was nowhere near so long; KAL 007 first penetrated and then left Soviet airspace (over Kamchatka), before reentering Soviet airspace (near Sakhalin). Its first penetration was very brief, a matter of minutes and forgivable even by the Soviet Union. Its second led to its destruction in short order.

The misidentification theory takes for granted that a 747 can very easily be distinguished from an RC-135. That is simply not the case; identification depends, among other things (size, aspect, frequencies, type of radar and displays), on atmospheric conditions. But as it happens, it is certain that the Soviet air-defense controllers knew exactly what they were destroying; this is one case where the negative evidence prevails. As in the Sherlock Holmes story, the dog that did not bark is definite proof: though Soviet air-defense controllers could have confused the KAL 007 radar image with that of an RC-135, the scheduled Korean Air Lines flight from Anchorage, Alaska, to Seoul, Korea, which Soviet radar would routinely track, had to be *somewhere* on the radar screens. If it was not, only two possibilities remained—either that KAL 007 had crashed into the sea without any signal at all, or else that the aircraft being intercepted was in fact KAL 007. So to believe in the misidentification theory, we have to assume that Soviet air-defense controllers not only confused the two radar images but believed that KAL 007 had mysteriously fallen out of the sky without even a few seconds in which to transmit a "mayday" call. Thus once again we must resist the seductive urge to believe in Soviet ineptness.

THE Soviet Union continues to make a large effort in strategic defense, maintaining costly forces to fight what can be fought (the bombers and cruise missiles), doing all it can to develop anti-ballistic-missile defenses, and keeping up a nationwide civil-defense program combining highly realistic with merely symbolic arrangements, from shelters to evacuation. The United States by contrast is pursuing innovation in offensive weapons (cruise missiles for the bombers, surface ships, and attack submarines, and Trident-2 submarine-launched missiles) and exploring many highly advanced defensive schemes based on satellite-mounted weapons, but it has no serious civil defense.

One could add details and nuances to the estimate of the Soviet Union's intercontinental nuclear strength and homeland defenses, but the result would not change, for the two forces do not have the same task. The United States must rely on believable threats to use its intercontinental nuclear forces to offset the Soviet Union's nonnuclear superiority and "tactical" nuclear parity. Otherwise matters would stand at the third level, where there is nothing to stop Soviet military intimidation of America's allies—who then could scarcely remain allies. The Soviet Union by contrast need only make the American intercontinental nuclear threat unbelievable in order to recover the invasion potential of its armies, thus restoring their power to intimidate or actually invade. To do that the Soviet Union does not even need intercontinental nuclear superiority, which it is striving so hard to achieve. But the United States does need a margin of intercontinental nuclear strength merely to keep the overall military balance duly balanced.

Hence "parity" (shorthand for strategic-nuclear parity) is or should be fundamentally unacceptable to the United States. Any true parity between the intercontinental nuclear forces of each side must leave the United States militarily inferior in all the continental theaters where the Soviet army can muster its power—namely Europe, Iran (and thus the Persian Gulf), and Korea. And that is the situation that now prevails, the true cause of today's anxieties for world peace.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vistas of Annihilation

Robert Alter

THE murder of more than a third of the Jewish people in six years of unspeakable horror continues to impose a disturbing dilemma on the kinds of political, intellectual, or spiritual lives Jews try to make for themselves as Jews. To turn their gaze from these events is to ignore the abysmal potential of the realm of history in which the Jewish people and humanity at large are, perforce, profoundly involved. But to ponder the vistas of annihilation too much may lead, as I argued in these pages not long ago,* to a kind of pornography of horror that distorts one's vision of what Jews have been or might become and that, in both academic life and in the popular media, has already produced a veritable Holocaust industry.

Perhaps some of the deplorable consequences of excessive concentration on the Holocaust have stemmed from the strong tendency to define it as an awesomely unique event in Jewish history. I hardly want to deny that in Hitler's war against the Jews genocide reached an order of magnitude, and ideologically-grounded evil attained a systematic pervasiveness, that have no equals in the previous experience of the Jewish people. But to insist, as so many have, on the imperative uniqueness of the event is to encourage seeing it in a vacuum, thus reducing all the variegated stuff of Jewish history to a prelude to the gas chambers.

The ghettos of Warsaw and Lodz, which have lately been receiving renewed attention,† were not symbolic theaters of destruction set against the backdrop of eternity, but dense intersections of all the richly contradictory forces that made up modern Polish Jewry—Bundism, Zionism, Hebraism, Yiddishism, assimilation, Hasidism, neo-Orthodoxy—together with the variously selective memories and forgettings of antecedent Jewish experience that each of these groups fostered. The Jews brought with them to the arenas of destruction all their sundry internal divisions, their individual and collective defects, and, one must surely add, their various inner resources, whether recently acquired or developed over the centuries. An awareness of such continuities and such complicating backgrounds may make it possible to see that, however traumatic the Hitler years were, Jewish history neither ended nor began with them.

Given this urgent need to set the Holocaust in a larger context, two new books on Jewish literary responses to historical disaster** are particularly welcome corrections to critical discussions that have tended to represent the world exclusively in ghastly black-and-white photos illuminated by the baleful light of the crematoria. *Ḥurban* and *Against the Apocalypse* are clearly conceived as coordinate studies. The authors, Alan Mintz and David Roskies, are close friends and fellow editors of a new academic quarterly, *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*. Both books use the phrase "responses to catastrophe" in their subtitles, and in his preface Mintz indicates that he and Roskies have divided up the territory, he concentrating entirely on Hebrew materials and Roskies chiefly on Yiddish. There are certain differences in tone, historical scope, and critical strategy between the two books, though both deserve praise for their lucidity, their carefully made critical distinctions, and the balanced historical perspective in which they place their subjects.

Mintz focuses his argument through critical readings of a limited number of major texts, beginning with Lamentations and then moving rapidly through Midrash to the Middle Ages, but concentrating on modern works by Mendele Mokher Seforim, Chaim Nachman Bialik, Shaul Tchernichovsky, Uri Zvi Greenberg, Aharon Appelfeld, Dan Pagis. Roskies begins his main story with the reactions in Yiddish literature to the pogroms of 1881 and advances by stages through the sundry disasters of the earlier 20th century to the Holocaust, offering a more panoramically detailed overview than does Mintz. Both share the conviction, which they succeed in making persuasive, that there exists not an absolute catastrophe, 1939-45, but a complicated history of responses to catastrophe, in some ways continu-

ROBERT ALTER, a contributing editor of COMMENTARY, is professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Berkeley. His most recent book is *Motives for Fiction* (Harvard University Press).

* "Deformations of the Holocaust," February 1981.

† The best recent book on the Warsaw ghetto is Yisrael Gutman's *The Jews of Warsaw 1939-1943* (Indiana, 475 pp., $24.95). The monumental *Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941-1944*, edited by Lucjan Dobroszycki, has just been published (Yale University Press, 608 pp., $35.00).

** *Ḥurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature*, by Alan Mintz, Columbia University Press, 283 pp., $26.00; *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture*, by David Roskies, Harvard University Press, 352 pp., $20.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ous, in others composed of certain radical departures, and this history enters significantly into the effort of most Hebrew and Yiddish writers to apprehend imaginatively the latest and worst of the disasters. In both cases, the discussions of premodern texts are less compelling than the investigations of materials written in the last hundred years, but one sees why the larger historical frame of reference was important for both writers.

The centerpiece of Mintz's book is the series of astute interpretations and evaluations he offers of poems by Tchernichovsky ("Baruch of Mainz"), Bialik ("In the City of Slaughter"), and Greenberg ("Streets of the River"), and of short fiction by Appelfeld. In all these readings, he is attentive to formal issues like style, poetic or narrative form, imagery, and genre, but he keeps steadily in view the question of how the deployment of these formal elements may be judged as an adequate or authentic response to the historical predicament addressed by the writer. In other words, though Mintz sometimes conjures with current critical terms such as the metaphor-metonymy opposition made popular by Roman Jakobson, his underlying concept of the task of criticism goes back to Lionel Trilling and other New York critics of the 40's and 50's.

Roskies, although he evinces some concern for such evaluations, is less interested in critical readings of individual works than in evoking a set of illuminating contexts for modern Yiddish literature. Thus, his exposition becomes at many moments a condensed and incisive social or cultural history of East European Jewry in recent generations. He gives a sense of the class background of literary activity, the relation between poetry and folk song, the new iconography developed by Jewish visual artists (the volume is illustrated), the shifting ideological currents in this century of crisis. His survey offers a vivid picture of the extraordinary boldness and uncompromising extremeness of much Yiddish literary response to historical violence from World War I onward.

Roskies's initially puzzling title has a double meaning: some of the writers he considers—perhaps most notably, the great Yiddish poet, Avraham Sutzkever*—have used their work to resist an apocalyptic understanding of the terrible events; more generally, Roskies's own decision to recoup a historical tradition implies a refusal of the apocalyptic perspective:

> The Jewish people are at the point of . . . allowing the Holocaust to become the crucible of their culture. I have set out to challenge the validity of this apocalyptic tendency by arguing for the vitality of Jewish response to catastrophe, never as great as in the last hundred years. And responses to the Holocaust do not mark the end of the process.

OF COURSE, it is not easy to say what precisely might constitute "vitality" in an activity so grim as literary responses to mass murder. I would like to propose and illustrate one direction in which an answer might lie, but in order to do that I want first to stress an important assumption about what the imagination makes of catastrophe that is suggested in somewhat different terms by both Roskies and Mintz. As these overviews of Yiddish and Hebrew literary history reveal, there is an inescapable conservative bias built into literary expression. To respond to a set of historical circumstances, however radically disturbing, through a poem or a story or a play, is to invoke your own consciousness of a whole literary corpus with its conventions and norms, and of any number of individual poems, stories, or plays. Even the aggressive iconoclast somehow uses the images he shatters and scrambles, so that all literature proves to be in some way a superimposition of the past on the present. An especially instructive instance of this phenomenon is the powerful presence in the Warsaw ghetto, documented by Roskies, of Bialik's 1903 poem on the Kishinev pogrom, "Upon the Slaughter." Yitzhak Katzenelson, the leading Yiddish poet of the ghetto, could go so far as to say, "Thanks to Bialik, our most profound [experiences] have been given eternal form and this has lifted a great burden from us."

This formal conservatism of literary expression raises questions about the authenticity of literary response to the disruptive and shifting movements of historical experience. The obvious advantage of such conservatism is that we preserve in acute adversity a sustaining sense of continuity with what we have been before, drawing on sets of images, systems of explanation, even the tonal nuances of particular words and idioms, inherited from the past. The fundamental disadvantage is that the redeployment of all these inherited resources may lead us to lie about the present, or at least to misapprehend in some way its terrible differentness. Literature ineluctably works with what Roskies calls "archetypes" and Mintz calls "paradigms," which by their generalizing character may go too far in harmonizing present experience with past assumptions.

The problem of such schematization, however, is more pervasive in ritual and the various shorthands of collective memory than it is in individual literary expression. Roskies, commenting on the memorial plaques for the destroyed towns of Lithuania that have been placed in the Choral Synagogue of Vilna, observes: "When Jews now mourn in public, . . . they preserve the collective memory of the collective disaster, but in so doing fall back on symbolic constructs and ritual acts that necessarily blur the specificity and the implacable contradictions of the event." Mintz makes a similar remark about the way Jewish historiography and liturgy tend to reduce disasters to a chain of dates and place-names ("Auschwitz" as a

* For a consideration of Sutzkever's life and work, see Ruth R. Wisse, "The Last Great Yiddish Poet?," COMMENTARY, September 1983.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

designation for the entire Holocaust): "In Jewish history the serial linkage of paradigmatic years and places makes a clear statement about the way in which discrete historical catastrophes are drained of their discreteness and absorbed into a larger tradition."

The literary imagination, I would argue, has the possibility of transcending this dilemma because it does not merely use inherited symbolic constructs but constantly disturbs them—and the activity of disturbance has become the more prominent with the emergence of literary modernism. (In Hebrew and Yiddish, modernist tensions become visible after 1881; the process in Hebrew begins in prose with Mendele's vehemently ironic allusivity and takes another two decades to surface in poetry with Bialik and Tchernichovsky.) There is, of course, a broad spectrum of varying literary responses to catastrophe that many readers will feel to be valid, but most of the texts discussed by Roskies and Mintz, whatever the styles and rhetorical strategies of the writers, in some way swerve from the neatness of inherited archetypes, and use literary language to resist the foreclosure of meanings encouraged by ritual, theology, ideology, and the sheer laziness of popular consciousness.

Mintz, at the end of the survey of Israeli literature about the Holocaust with which he concludes his study, spells out this underlying principle: "Literary art has succeeded in stimulating a deeper encounter with the event and thereby put a brake on its premature absorption into a preexisting framework of meaning." What Mintz has in mind specifically in referring to premature absorption is the tendency within Israeli culture to make political capital out of the Holocaust, but his generalization holds for many of the major texts of Hebrew and Yiddish literature of the past hundred years. My one small reservation concerns the phrase, "a deeper encounter with the event." Literature leaves us, willy-nilly, with an elaborate verbal mediation of any historical event, and for this particular event, those of us lucky enough to have been born in another place or time have reason to be grateful that we did not and cannot "encounter" it. What we should not avoid confronting is the idea—or rather, the many competing ideas—of the event, the multiple reverberations it continues to send through our collective and individual lives. In precisely this regard, the varied imaginative responses of literature can be salutary by enabling us as readers to make the precarious yet indispensable effort to effect some alignment between the event and the symbolic constructs of the Jewish past. It is here, I think, that the "vitality" of response of which Roskies speaks is chiefly to be found.

Generalizations about a process like this, which depends on the specificity of the individual literary text, will not be very meaningful, and so I would like to illustrate the principle through three very different poems by Israeli poets. The texts I have chosen all relate, but only obliquely, to the horror of the Holocaust. I of course do not mean to imply that this is the only valid way to write about the subject, but obliqueness does have its advantages—because it avoids the sado-masochistic excesses of sensationalism and because for the most part the Holocaust now persists in our experience through aftershocks of consciousness and indirect effects on our inner lives and our collective existence. As it happens, two of the three poems I will translate (none of them is discussed by Mintz) are by writers who are not at all thought of as important Israeli poets. Malachi Bet-Aryeh is an archival librarian who has also published poetry; Shulamit Har-Even is better known as a novelist. The third poem is by the leading Hebrew poet, Yehuda Amichai. Of the three, only Bet-Aryeh is a native Israeli, Amichai and Har-Even having been brought as children to Palestine, from Germany and Poland respectively, as the Holocaust began to unfold.

Bet-Aryeh's poem is called "Between Flesh." The title in Hebrew makes an untranslatable pun essential to the meaning of the whole, since *beyn besarim,* between flesh, pointedly echoes *ha-brit beyn ha-betarim,* the Covenant Between the Cleft Animal Parts recorded in Genesis 15. The poem:

Your velvet nakedness, in this gloom,
there is no God, you. All me, all you.
The blood's high tide.
The fragrance of the flesh.

And behold a great dark dread descends
in this gloom, your flesh in my eyes,
in one smoking day was cleft,
flesh
and blood,
in this gloom, your velvet nakedness
your flesh—and theirs.

This is a strangely exalted erotic poem, the exaltation deriving in large part from the abundant verbal and imagistic recollections of the covenant between Abraham and God. That formative event of Israelite history takes place in the "gloom" (the unusual word *'alatah,* used twice here) of nightfall, Abraham sunk into a trance, sitting on one side of the cut animal pieces and God on the other. The first line of the second stanza here reproduces integrally the last clause of Genesis 15:12, and the "smoking oven and flaming torch" that mysteriously pass between the pieces in the biblical story are alluded to in the telescoped phrase, "one smoking day." Most daringly, the cleft parts of Genesis are transformed in the poem into the cleft flesh (the same verbal stem, *b-t-r*) of the naked female body.

It would seem, then, that the sexual encounter has radically displaced the covenantal one. The lover affirms his purely human sense of solemn connection, experiencing, in the exaltation of carnal consummation, Abraham's fear and trembling.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is no God in this ecstatic moment, everything being absorbed in the "all" of the man speaking and of the woman addressed, the very linkage of the biblical idiom "flesh-and-blood" broken down to the imperious immediacy of its physical components: blood, flesh. The mystery of the scene in Genesis suffuses the poem, but it has become, most urgently, the mystery of carnality.

The poem, however, is more disorienting than I have so far suggested, for its very last word opens up a vertiginous new horizon of signification. Who are the "they" whose flesh so uncannily interrupts the absolute twoness of erotic intimacy? The last two words in the Hebrew are literally "your-flesh—their-flesh" (*besareikh-besaram*), so the meaning of the poem turns on the referent of a final possessive suffix. It is unlikely that it could refer to the flesh of the slaughtered animals in Genesis 15 because the inert creatures have no vital presence in the biblical story and are never designated in it as flesh; the poem's transformation, moreover, of cloven animal parts into woman's flesh would become confused by a suggestion at the end that the biblical *betarim* were also *besarim*. In the terrific compactness of the poem, the smoking day, the descending darkness, the recollection of the word "oven" (which appears along with "smoking" in Genesis 15 though not in the poem), and the heavy stress on blood and flesh lead inexorably back to the landscape of the death camps where murdered millions were shoveled into the flames in an awful reversal of God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:5) that his seed would be multitudinous as the stars. A very different prospect of meaning for "there is no God" now comes into view.

Psychologically, the poem records the flickering intervention of a nightmare image in a moment of ecstasy. The woman's lovely nakedness, so rapturously evoked by the lover, triggers a recollection, associatively mediated by the images drawn from Genesis 15, of naked bodies in the crematoria. The disturbance of archetypes in the poem makes it a very private text with strong public reverberations. Not all of us may be visited by the particular nightmare hinted in the poem's last word, but this astonishing fusion of disjunct realms intimates how, as a fact of consciousness after the Holocaust, the shadow of horror can at any moment pass over the heart of joy, and, simultaneously, how the supposed heirs of covenantal assurances may find themselves lost in the wilderness of a history without God.

IN CONTRAST to the passionate intensity of "Between Flesh," Shulamit Har-Even's "Noah in the Regions of the Sea" seems relaxed, engagingly satiric, even jocular. This difference in tone is possible because the poet is dealing not with the irruption of an image of the horror into the present but with a survivor's difficulties in coping with the quotidian reality that is the aftermath of catastrophe:

Noah, skinny as a pump-handle,
still with his flood-legs,
goes tottering through the sunset
like a walking sail, and hears
the crunching of his neighbors' bones
in the vast sand, *tzakh-tzakh*.

The gentle waters
brought him coppery light, and a buoy,
and his reflection
which is never clear.

His feet churn through the sand
and the salt earth, patiently. His love
is doomed to be temporary.
As yet he has no fixed address.

Noah is learning a new language,
learning noon and stone and bow.
Since landing, he's grown a mustache,
gotten his Agency bed and two blankets,
is still not used to the thorns
and doesn't understand his dreams, as though
there were a mistake, no dream, not his.

Maybe the next wave will wipe out
everything, pain and ruined mouth, for
childhood doesn't grow, no never,
it is covered up in layers like a thickening conch.

Noah walks between seasons,
through the mother-of-pearl and the skeletons.
Were he questioned, he'd repeat the question
with startled concentration. In the sand
the language of answers is crunched,
tzakh-tzakh.

Noah goes off. He's getting used to things,
only the mosquitoes. As to the matter of
lightning,
he's been assured it is over.

The persistent presence of allusions to the Bible in even the most colloquial or avant-garde Hebrew poetry has often been remarked. In many instances, such allusions have been crucial in poems responding to the Holocaust because through allusion an imaginative confrontation is effected between the symbolic instruments used by tradition to define meaning and the event that seems a disruption of all meaning. In the premodern period, Hebrew poets facing catastrophe sought in one way or another to harmonize their awareness of the biblical background with their perception of the grim historical foreground. In our own century, beginning strikingly with Bialik's Kishinev poems, poetry has become a theater of antagonism between classical text and contemporary trauma. In such antagonism there is no simple winner: for the most part, the biblical text is not flatly rejected but rather tested, shaken, unsettled, wrenched into a new orientation.

That process works equally but differently in "Between Flesh" and "Noah in the Regions of the Sea." In the former, the biblical past eerily invades the present; in the latter, a moment of the biblical story is entirely reconstructed in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

image of the present. For this reason, allusion in the Har-Even poem is solely to the narrative situation in Genesis, not to its language or images (the only distinctive term from the biblical Noah story in the entire poem is "bow" at the beginning of the fourth stanza). Obviously but effectively, Noah here has been recast as a survivor of the European catastrophe who has arrived in Israel, been given his new immigrant's basic equipment by the Jewish Agency, and who can't get used to the mosquitoes—or to a world where everyone he knew is dead. Disproportion, incongruity, grotesqueness are prominent in this portrait of Noah floundering through the sand and crushed bones, skinny as a pump-handle, like a walking sail, for the poem enacts an experience of total disorientation of a man who finds himself, after the cataclysm, cast up, virtually alone, on the shore of an unfamiliar world.

In what way is this reshaping of the Noah story more than just a clever literary trick? In one respect, the poem might be thought of as a kind of midrashic fleshing-out of the biblical story, showing in contemporary terms what it must have been like for Noah to begin life again after the whole world he had known was wiped out. The Deluge in Genesis, as the story of divine wrath against humanity that destroys all but a tiny handful of survivors, may be a plausible emblem for the Holocaust, but if it begins with God's anger, it ends with His covenantal promise to Noah never again to devastate the earth with a flood. In "Noah in the Regions of the Sea," God is absent either as the agent of destruction or as the guarantor of the future. Indeed, even Noah's family, the nucleus of biological regeneration, is absent, so that he is alone with his neighbors' bones and the ambiguous language of the crunching sand. The only hint of other human presences is the bureaucracy that has given him his bed and blankets and that, in its characteristically impersonal language ("As to the matter of lightning . . ."), promises him that the Deluge will not come again. This is a kind of assurance utterly different from God's ringing and repeated promise to Noah (Genesis 8:21-22; 9:11-17) that there will be no second cataclysm—different not only in its impersonality but in its evasive vagueness, which leads us to suspect it may be worth no more than any other bureaucratic promise.

The archetypal background of the biblical Deluge story makes this contemporary Noah not just a special case of survivor but a sort of Jewish Everyman after the Holocaust, while a principal theme of the original archetype has been unsettled because the new Noah must begin again uneasily, pondering the vanished world from which he came, wondering what havoc the next wave will wreak, clinging to a tenuous promise of futurity. There are, of course, many other possible constructions of the Jewish condition after 1945, but "Noah in the Regions of the Sea," in so vividly embodying the outward uncertainties and inner bafflement of the survivor who nevertheless strives to go on, illustrates the nuanced effectiveness of poetry as a response to collective disaster.

MY FINAL illustration, a poem from Yehuda Amichai's most recent Hebrew volume, *The Hour of Grace* (1982), evokes a postwar setting—one assumes, in Germany—without any recourse to biblical allusion. The poem is called "The Inn of the Sun":

The Inn of the Sun in the mountains. We stayed
there
a day or two. People talked by great windows
toward the darkness.
The high grass wanted us to cry
and in the hazy valley elegant tennis players
silently played, as if with no ball.
And the sad-eyed ones came to the clear-voiced
ones
and said: you are living in my house that was
my house. A big tree grew here. What did
you do to it?

The Inn of the Sun. We stayed there
two or three days.
And in the white rooms remembrance and hope,
night and eternal salvation
for those who will never return,
the pallor of death on the great curtains
and a golden giggle behind the walls.
Planes passed overhead
and above them a camouflage net made of stars
so we won't see no God is there.

But below, at the heavy table
Amid the smoke and alcohol fumes,
a heavy Christian and a light Jew
work together on a new faith.

The Inn of the Sun. "A light rain then fell."
That's all that remains of the Inn of the Sun.

The poem is in several ways uncharacteristic of Amichai. The displacement of his usual emphatically personal first-person singular by the unspecified first-person plural, the use of fragmentary narrative, the vaguely located Central European setting are oddly (if inadvertently) reminiscent of the fiction of Aharon Appelfeld. The poem is a kind of ghost story, and most of its details are quietly orchestrated to produce the appropriate ghostly effects. The Inn of the Sun, one gathers, is a gracious, old-fashioned European mountain resort recalling the prewar era, with great curtained windows looking out on the mountain landscape and on the tennis courts in the valley below. But the lighting is arranged so that everything in the scene dissolves into shadows and fog. The guests at the windows seem to be speaking, in the oddness of the syntax, not to each other but "toward the darkness." There is haze in the valley where the tennis players, eerily, play "as if with no ball." The heavy table stands in a cloud of smoke and alcohol fumes, the curtains glimmer with a deathly pallor, and the only indications of brightness are in the disquieting "golden giggle"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

behind the walls and in the mere name of the Inn of the Sun, which is actually swathed in night.

Coordinated with this play of darkness, haze, and smoke is a blurring of temporal indications. The stay at the inn is a day or two, then two or three; the suggestion of a scene at nightfall or perhaps late afternoon in the first stanza is succeeded by an intimation of things occurring, not necessarily sequentially, late at night in the rest of the poem. At the end, the recollection dissolves in a remembered remark about rain, like some evanescent hallucination melting in the sea of real time.

What is also noteworthy, especially if one considers that Amichai is a poet who depends a great deal on the brilliance, even the extravagance, of his inventive use of metaphor, is the muted quality of figurative language in the poem. Apart from the personification of the grass in the first stanza (where the otherwise buried pathos of the speaker surfaces) and the epithet "golden" attached to "giggle," the poem is devoid of clearly figurative language—with the exception of the camouflage net made of stars at the end of the second stanza. This is the kind of metaphor, which juxtaposes contemporary military reality with a religious or metaphysical realm, that Amichai has made one of his poetic trademarks. Here it is reserved for the thematic climax, while in the rest of the poem the supernatural character of spectral presences is conveyed in a series of literal utterances, as though what is eerie might have become merely melodramatic by too much metaphorical elaboration.

The words of the sad-eyed ones—obviously, the specters of the murdered or banished Jews—to those who have displaced them seem deliberately chosen for their simple predictability, and turn on an expressive redundancy, "you are living in my house that was / my house," as if through repetition the speakers were trying to assimilate the stubborn fact that remains unassimilable. In any case, the sense of spectral flickering and dissolution that pervades the poem is a perfectly apt correlative for an ex-European Jew's perception of Europe one generation after: a world has vanished as though it never was, but the memory, real and fantasized, of those who once inhabited that world floats back over it, still trying to take in the actuality of irrevocable uprooting.

I NOTED earlier that Jewish literary responses to modern historical disaster are made up of both continuities with the past and radical breaks from it. Perhaps one may see that most clearly in the changing absences of God in our three poems. I suspect that when a Jew writes a poem about the Holocaust, at least if he is writing in Hebrew or Yiddish, it is hard for him not to make God in some way an issue, however implicitly. (This is true even of a poet with so thoroughly secular a perspective as Dan Pagis.) The speaker in "Between Flesh" intransigently declares "There is no God"—because He has been burned to nothing by the fires of human passion, or of the crematoria; and yet the theologically fraught language of the poem suggests that perhaps He nevertheless exists, in some terrific unlooked-for refraction, in man's imponderable capacity to desire, to suffer, to destroy. God is never alluded to in "Noah in the Regions of the Sea." The biblical story has been emptied of divine presence, nothing more remaining than the shadow of the idea of God, for which the supervising bureaucracy of the contemporary Noah's world is a sad substitute, indeed. Amichai's poem, like Bet-Aryeh's, includes an explicit declaration that there is no God, but in a very different tone and with very different implications. The beauty of the stars, once a token of God's presence, as in the magnificent creation-poem that is Psalm 8, is, in this place where a whole people has been driven out or murdered, camouflage for His abysmal absence.

Nevertheless, at a table far below the deceptive canopy of the night sky, a Christian—"heavy" by metonymic contamination from the piece of ponderous German furniture at which he sits—and a Jew—"light" by way of obvious antithesis to his Christian counterpart, and perhaps because he is not more than a wraith—sit and try to concoct a new religion. This highly elliptical and vaguely absurd scene brings us close to the heart of Amichai's peculiar version of post-traditionalism. The emptiness of the cosmic spaces beyond the stars has been confirmed by the terrible events whose afterimages flit through the poem. Yet we do not easily dispense with the idea of faith. The imagination pushes, if only in the realm of fantasy, as a gesture of impossible nostalgia, toward an encounter between Christian and Jew not as murderer and victim but as co-workers in the shaping of a new faith after the foundations of faith seem to have been destroyed.

The enigmatic character, the fragmentation of both form and theme, the plain spookiness of Amichai's poem make it an extreme case of the general phenomenon I have tried to describe: as readers, we are left with a sense of uneasiness because uneasiness is one of the important things one has to feel about this subject. The Holocaust has often been reduced to a shorthand of horror—"Auschwitz," boxcars, gas chambers, lampshades, soap. The distinctive value of poetic response is that it subtly resists stereotypes, insists on complexity of feeling and indeterminacy of vision, unsettles the very frameworks of interpretation that we might otherwise uncritically bring into play. Although the destruction of European Jewry is not an event without precursors, it remains the most unfathomable of experiences in Jewish history. Poetry's special power simultaneously to dislodge and intensify inherited texts, terms, concepts, and values reminds us that all projects for fathoming the event presume to conclude where, for a long time to come, we need to question and to brood.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What Good Is Freedom of Speech?

Irving Younger

A CASE. Assume that the town council or the state legislature or the United States Congress enacts a bill forbidding any person to advocate such-and-such a policy. What is there to say about the statute? Every American lawyer knows. The statute is invalid under the First Amendment, reference to which, with elaboration and embellishment teased out of Supreme Court opinions, constitutes an American lawyer's reason.

But change the case. Assume that the First Amendment does not exist. Now what is there to say about the statute? Quite apart from the First Amendment and the cases construing it, can we advance reasons why the statute should be held invalid?

My subject, then, is freedom of speech naked and unadorned. What is it in itself, I ask, and what is its use? Would we enact the First Amendment were it a proposal open to vote rather than a text to be applied? Why, if at all, should one fight and die for it? In short, I shall not start with the First Amendment. I want to find out whether we would end with it

SINCE the subtle and complex design for the structure of government contained in the Constitution would remain unaffected by the absence of a First Amendment, perhaps freedom of speech is supportable as something explicit in that design, a kind of interstitial quality presupposed by American politics.

Chief Justice John Marshall touched upon this idea in *McCulloch* v. *Maryland*:

> [A constitution's] nature, therefore, requires, that only its great outlines should be marked, its important objects designated, and the minor ingredients which compose those objects be deduced from the nature of the objects themselves. That this idea was entertained by the framers of the American Constitution, is not only to be inferred from the nature of this instrument, but from the language. . . . [W]e must never forget that it is a *constitution* we are expounding.

The most considered elaboration of Marshall's suggestion that rules of constitutional law may be inferred from the arrangement of the Constitution is *Structure and Relationship in Constitutional Law* by Charles L. Black, Jr. With respect to the First Amendment, Professor Black forthrightly says that it is dispensable, for freedom of speech would be found anyway to inhere in the nature of American government:

> But the First Amendment is only evidentiary of what would in any case be reasonably obvious—that petition and assembly for the discussion of national governmental measures are rights founded on the very nature of a government running on public opinion. . . . [M]ost serious public discussion of political issues is really a part, at least in one aspect, of the process of national government, and hence ought to be invulnerable to state attack—not on First Amendment grounds, not on due process grounds, but on *McCulloch* v. *Maryland* . . . grounds.

Black's argument comes to this: given a government such as ours, freedom of speech is necessary and therefore, without reference to the First Amendment, must be protected. Yes, yes, given a government such as ours, freedom of speech is necessary, for ours is a government resting upon "serious public discussion of political issues," which is to say, given a government in which freedom of speech is necessary, freedom of speech is necessary. The question has been begged. The question is whether a government in which freedom of speech is necessary is what ours ought to be. Answer that question and you have done something to justify liberty.

IN THE middle of the 15th century, Johannes Gutenberg introduced movable type to Europe. The immediate consequence was books cheap and common in place of manuscripts dear and scarce. "Speech" soon came to include speech in print, and thus the concept of freedom of speech expanded beyond spoken words addressed to an audience within earshot and reached words on paper, accessible to all who could read. Recognizing the potency of the printing press, in 1637 Star Chamber put the power to censor in the hands of Bishop Laud, close adviser to King Charles I. Four years later, as part of its struggle for supremacy, the Long Parliament abolished both Star Chamber and Laud's powers. Immedi-

IRVING YOUNGER is a Washington, D.C. lawyer and writer who during the current academic year holds the Marvin J. Sonosky Professorship at the University of Minnesota Law School.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ately there tumbled from the printing presses of England a flood of licentious and seditious literature. Disturbed by the theological and political tendencies of such books, on June 14, 1643, Parliament enacted a new licensing statute. No book might be printed without permission from the government's censors.

Then resident in London was a thirty-six-year-old poet and classical scholar of growing reputation. Already the author of five masterpieces in verse—"Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Comus," and "Lycidas"—he sat down one day to compose a plea in opposition to the new statute. His measure was prose, his form an oration addressed to Parliament as if Parliament were an Athenian jury, and his title an allusion to the seat of the Council of State hard by the Acropolis. *Areopagitica*, he called it, and it appeared on the bookstalls in 1644, without a license, and consequently innocent of a publisher's or a printer's name, but bearing, boldly inscribed on the title page, the name of its author, John Milton. Let us see whether it shows us the good of freedom of speech.

Milton divides *Areopagitica* into five parts. The first exalts books:

> For books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are. . . . [A]s good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life.

Conceding the magnificence of the imagery, we note that it gives us nothing a thinker would call a reason to vote for freedom of speech, and proceed to the second part of the oration, which is a tedious history of censorship, useless to our purpose.

The third part expands upon the first part: the latter was in praise of books, the former praises the knowledge to be gained from books. That knowledge includes evil, which is necessary because, without evil, there can be no good:

> Good and evill we know in the field of this World grow up together almost inseparably.... It was from out the rinde of one apple tasted that the knowledge of good and evill as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the World. And perhaps this is that doom which *Adam* fell into of knowing good and evill, that is to say of knowing good by evill. As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdome can there be to choose, what continence to forbeare without the knowledge of evill? . . . I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd vertue, unexercis'd and unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for not without dust and heat.

There is no goodness, Milton says, save in the choosing of good over evil: hence evil is the necessary condition of good. An interesting idea, but our concern here is with secular questions. The legislature has enacted a statute; the statute infringes freedom of speech; the Constitution omits a First Amendment. What arguments can we bring to bear on the statute? The apologetics of Jewish or Christian theology are out of place, and apologetics are what the third part of *Areopagitica* is all about.

In the fourth part, Milton's discourse turns practical. Censorship, he says, a system for licensing the publication of books, will not work, and he identifies four reasons why this is so. First, the decisions of a censor cannot be trusted unless the censor is infallible and beyond corruption. No mortal possesses such grace; therefore no mortal is qualified to be a censor. Second, since anything may tend to evil if misused, an effective system of censorship will end up suppressing everything, even music, dancing, windows, balconies, eating, drinking, clothes, and "the mixt conversation of our youth, male and female together." Third, if a scheme for issuing licenses be instituted, what does one do with books already printed and in circulation? Fourth, the job of censor is so dull and unsatisfactory that no able person will want it.

Well, Milton may have demolished censorship, but his demolition helps us not at all. To begin with, Milton is concerned with licensing, a system whereby the censor would sometimes permit publication and sometimes refuse. All of Milton's points are avoided if the censor always forbids. When no books may be published, one need not worry about the quality of the licensing bureaucrats. That, it will be recalled, is the nature of the statute in our hypothetical case. It does not regulate a certain kind of speech: it bars it altogether. Who then needs a censor? A policeman to arrest violators is required, nothing more. Next, Milton's arguments evaporate in the presence of a brilliant administrator. You or I may be unequal to the task, but what of a man with the executive skills of Julius Caesar, or Napoleon, or Alexander Hamilton, or Lenin? That censorship is hard to make work does not mean that it cannot be made to work. Lastly, it is something ignoble to build an argument for freedom of speech on the vexations of administering a censorship law. There should be a kind of symmetry in political logic, as much as elsewhere: arguments for freedom ought to possess a certain elevation of tone.

MILTON gives us those arguments in the fifth part of *Areopagitica*, beginning with the very transitional sentence by which the poet moves us forward from the fourth

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

part: "I lastly proceed from the no good it can do, to the manifest hurt it causes, in being first the greatest discouragement and affront, that can be offer'd to learning and to learned men." Without freedom of speech, the life of the mind will not thrive—or so Milton says.

The life of the mind is typified by three figures. First, the scientist. Alas, scientific and technical accomplishment of the highest order is encountered as frequently in totalitarian countries as in free. It was the Soviet Union which first orbited a satellite and Germany under Hitler which made the V-2 rocket. Second, the artist, between whose achievements and liberty there seems to be no necessary relationship at all. To borrow David Hume's remark in his essay, *Of Civil Liberty*, "Ariosto, Tasso, Galileo, no more than Raphael or Michelangelo, were not born in republics." Third, the humanist, devoted to the discussion of things like freedom of speech. Surely he is the man of learning Milton had in mind. I suppose he was, and there, precisely, is the rub. Milton's argument is that the man of learning needs freedom of speech; but if the man of learning is the sort of man who discusses freedom of speech, the argument comes down to the bland proposition that the sort of man who discusses freedom of speech needs freedom of speech. Even the least exigent will insist upon more rigor than that, so let us turn to Milton's second argument.

This is not so much an argument as a song of exultation:

> Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam, purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticat a year of sects and schisms.

It is magnificent, but it is addressed to the heart, not the head. A writer equally gifted but differently disposed might have moved us as powerfully in favor of quietness, order, proportion, and duty. (Shakespeare did with Ulysses's speeches in *Troilus and Cressida*.) Where then is reason? Perhaps waiting for us in Milton's third argument, about Truth (always spelled by Milton with a capital T).

Milton starts by assuring us that Truth is no abstraction. It is real, capable of contending with its opposite, and always victorious:

> And though all the windes of doctrin were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licencing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falshood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the wors, in a free and open encounter?

But if Truth is real, as Milton says it is, then it can be discovered. While the search goes on, freedom of speech is necessary, for the search consists in the unimpeded give and take of argument and reason. But once Truth has been found, once it has been pursued to its resting place among the clouds and secured with cords of light, what then remains to justify freedom of speech? If the value of freedom of speech is that it assures the contest between Truth and falsehood, what happens to that value when the contest is won? Truth captured is man's companion forever. Hunt no more. The chase is over.

Given Milton's conception of Truth—real, definite, triumphant over falsehood—his arguments collapse. They are incoherent, for Truth so conceived justifies freedom of speech only until Truth has been won. What is important thereafter is loyalty to Truth, not the defense of liberty. Change the conception of Truth, however, and the argument takes a different form. Let Truth be something other than real, definite, and triumphant, let it be discussion itself, not the thing to which discussion may lead, let it be a process rather than a precipitate, and we have an argument which is airtight because, sadly, it is tautological. The argument will go as follows: freedom of speech is justified by truth, and since truth is the process of discussion, why, freedom of speech is justified by the need to discuss, by the necessity, that is, for freedom of speech. Freedom of speech, therefore, justifies freedom of speech; and while it is hard to dissent from this, I do not seriously hope that it will convince anyone that the statute in our hypothetical case is bad. "Your honor, this statute is invalid because it curtails freedom of speech, and freedom of speech is essential." "Why?" asks his honor. "Because freedom of speech is essential if we are to have freedom of speech."

Milton's oration is a great work of literary art. As a reasoned argument, it is underdone.

RANGING forward from John Milton, we come two centuries later to the extraordinary John Stuart Mill. The eldest son of James Mill, himself an economist and historian of note, John Stuart by the age of eight had mastered Latin, Greek, and algebra. At twelve, he was immersed in scholastic logic and, a year later, drinking deep of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. The consequence was a nervous collapse, from which he recovered to enter the East India Company. While carrying a major share of the burden of administering that distant subcontinent, he began to contribute essays and reviews to the intellectual journals. In 1843, he published a book on logic and, in 1848, another on political economy. Three years later, now forty-five years old, he married Harriet Taylor, whom he described as the supreme influence on his life. Theirs was one of the great Victorian love affairs. Inspired by her,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John Stuart wrote *On the Enfranchisement of Women*, the tract from which may be traced the development of the women's movement of today. When Harriet died in 1858, John Stuart found solace in unremitting toil. A year later, he published *On Liberty*, a pamphlet dedicated to Harriet's memory, with the emotion of a Shakespeare sonnet encapsulated in the style of a utilitarian philosopher.

On Liberty deals with several kinds of freedom, speech among them. In support of freedom of speech, it advances two arguments, one of which merely repeats what is found in *Areopagitica*. Mill, like Milton, says that freedom of speech is justified by the good which flows from the combat between truth and error, an argument which we have seen does not stand up. Mill's other argument is new. Truth, for Milton, was Truth with a capital T, the Truth of revealed religion, dissent from which was, by definition, error. For Mill, there was no such thing as revealed truth. So Mill's other argument in the cause of freedom of speech is that the forbidden opinion may turn out to be true, an argument unavailable to Milton but as flawed as was his argument with respect to Truth. The argument is good only so long as the game is afoot. Once the beast has been captured, once truth is brought home and domesticated, the justification fails. How can the search for truth justify freedom of speech after the search for truth has come to a successful conclusion and the truth be known? It cannot, unless we define truth, not as something real and definite, but as a process of inquiry. And once we settle upon that definition, whatever justification of freedom of speech we then appear to have in hand turns (as we have just noted) tautological, freedom of speech necessary because speech must be free.

MILL's most distinguished publicist was Walter Bagehot, economist, sociologist, and literary critic, who managed in fresh and lucid English to lay the foundations of the modern theory of central banking. In 1874, Bagehot published *The Metaphysical Basis of Toleration*, an attempt to restate Mill's defense of liberty in terms appropriate to liberal democracy.

The essence of Bagehot's argument is identical with Mill's. The state should guarantee freedom of speech, he urges, because freedom is necessary to the discovery of truth. Here is the crux of Bagehot's essay:

> I say that the State power should not be used to arrest discussion, because the State power may be used equally for truth or error, for Mohammedanism or Christianity, for belief or no-belief, but in discussion, truth has an advantage. Arguments always tell for truth as such, and against error as such: if you let the human mind alone, it has a preference for good argument over bad; it oftener takes truth than not. But if you do not let it alone, you give truth no advantage at all; you substitute a game of force, where all doctrines are equal, for a game of logic where the truer have the better chance.

It takes no great intellectual powers to perceive the assumptions of Bagehot's argument. They are the assumptions of Milton and Mill: that Truth —or truth—is real, is capable of determination, and in the combat with falsehood is always the victor. Those assumptions underlie a justification of freedom of speech which, we have seen, will not bear examination. The argument of Truth, the argument of Milton, fails as soon as Truth has been attained. The argument of truth, the argument of Mill and of Bagehot, is nothing but a tautology.

Bagehot at least makes explicit the political nature of his justification of freedom and, doing so, underscores the fallacy of his arguments. To speak of Truth in politics infallibly leads to disaster. The wise politician knows that what politics requires is not Truth but prudence, the one course of action out of many which minimizes loss, ameliorates misfortune, and gets us through to tomorrow. Something like that is why Burke cautioned against ever adopting measures which, in the hope that they will bring happiness later, make for hardship now.

The wise politician also knows that the circumstances of political and social life are so complex and varied that no single mind can grasp them all. Then perhaps we can justify freedom of speech along the following lines. The search for the least bad alternative in politics must be a group rather than a solo enterprise, for no one politician is astute enough to find it unaided, and the proper functioning of the group requires freedom of speech.

Freedom of speech thereby becomes necessary for the proper functioning of the group which makes political decisions. The real question, however, is how large a group? The sort of analysis and weighing of alternative courses of action which characterize authentic political deliberation as opposed to the marketing of vapidity which constitutes a contemporary American election campaign is clearly impossible for groups of thousands or millions. It is feasible only for groups of tens or twenties. Concede that, as I think we must, and the argument is gone. We have been looking for a justification of freedom of speech for a nation. What we have found is a justification of freedom of speech among the members of a cabinet or a congress.

STILL, have we not given John Stuart Mill too short a shrift? If Mill's defense of freedom of speech comes to little, perhaps there is something in his general theory of liberty. That general theory is familiar. As to one's self, Mill argues, freedom is absolute. Only where conduct affects others may society legitimately assert an interest. In Mill's own words:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> To justify [government's interference with a person's freedom], the conduct from which it is desired to deter him must be calculated to produce evil to someone else. The only part of the conduct of anyone for which he is amenable to society is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.

The rejoinder to this leaps instantly to mind. So complicated and interrelated has society become that there is no such thing as a wholly self-regarding act. You assert a right under Mill's general theory of liberty to ride your motorcycle without a crash helmet. What if you hit the rear end of a truck? You may well suffer some injury the helmet would have prevented. Is it really your own business? The ambulance will take you to the municipal hospital, where great efforts will be made to keep you alive and restore you to health, efforts which my taxes support. Now tell me that your act is wholly self-regarding.

This rejoinder to Mill's general theory of liberty, I think, is sound, but only with a qualification. Of course there is no such thing as wholly self-regarding behavior: every act by any of us in some ways affects all of us. However, not every act by any of us directly affects all of us. Some acts involve others than the actor only remotely. That is the nuance the rejoinder misses. Our conduct binds us to each other in a kind of continuum, much as all physical entities are bound to each other by gravity. The moon asserts a gravitational attraction upon the earth, and I upon the moon. Did the moon have seas, they would yearn toward me twice a day. My influence upon them might be too small to measure, but influence there would be, no different from the influence of the moon upon the earth, by very much not too small to measure. The difference is one merely of degree.

Take Mill's general theory of liberty, so understood, and make of it an argument in favor of freedom of speech. "Your honor," we would say to the judge in our hypothetical case,

> as John Stuart Mill put it, "over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign." I will not contend that in the modern world there can be a wholly self-regarding act of the kind which, according to Mill, is subject only to the individual's sovereignty. I accept the interconnectedness of everything. I urge, though, that not everything is equally closely interconnected, that some things are more closely interconnected than others, and that what we must do is draw a line on the continuum, treating acts on one side of the line as if they were wholly self-regarding, on the other side, not. On the one side, then, the individual would be sovereign, on the other side society might legitimately infringe upon the individual's freedom. If, in our hypothetical case, we draw the line this side of the point designating the statute's proscription of advocacy of such-and-such a policy, it will follow that the statute is invalid for interfering with what we have agreed to treat as the self-regarding act of the individual who engages in the proscribed advocacy.

"The threshold proposition from which your argument flows," says the judge, "is that, wherever we draw the boundary, there is some area of conduct properly viewed as self-regarding and thus entirely within the prerogative of the individual, unanswerable to society." "That is so, your honor," we reply. "Well," the judge says, "if that is your threshold proposition, should you not examine it? Is it wise to mark out an area of individual sovereignty? Are you ready to insist that there is a line beyond which the state may not intrude? Do men really want to be free?"

THERE's the question politics comes down to, and the answer is every man's to give for himself. One possibility is most powerfully expressed by Dostoevsky. About a third of the way through *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan tells Alyosha about a poem he has written. It is set in Seville during the Inquisition. An auto-da-fé is in progress. One hundred heretics are to be burned alive. So great an event warrants the presence of the Grand Inquisitor himself, a saintly old priest of ninety. A man appears. Saying nothing, he heals the blind and restores a dead child to life. The Grand Inquisitor orders the man arrested. When the prisoner is brought to his study, the Grand Inquisitor speaks to him. I know you, he says. You came once before and promised freedom. That is why you were crucified. Above all things, men dread freedom. They do not want to choose, they do not want to be compelled to choose. The burden is too great for them. Men want only three things. The first is bread. The second is someone to bow down to. The third is community of worship. All three I provide, thereby lifting from the shoulders of men the insupportable weight of responsibility. And so, out of loving kindness to my flock, I will burn you tomorrow.

At the other extreme I advance the example of Socrates, in the story of whose trial* lies a secret worth knowing. The secret is that, although Socrates drank the hemlock, he had not been defeated. He had won because, for all that the vote went against him, that the penalty was death, and that no pardon was forthcoming to mitigate the full rigor of the sentence, there was that within Socrates to which the proceeding failed to reach. His voice, his *daimon* (as he called it), his purpose in life—these were unaffected by anything the Athenian jury could do to him. Socrates would

* A story I told in an earlier essay, "Socrates and Us," COMMENTARY, December 1980.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lead the examined life, for the unexamined life is not worth living. Socrates's body and his physical existence were subject to the jury's command. Hence he bowed to the verdict and drained the cup. But his spirit—what it was that made him Socrates and none other—his spirit stood beyond the reach of Athens and its law. However far the power of the state may extend, it has limits. Beyond those limits, the state and its law are powerless. Beyond those limits lies sanctuary.

We have seen that the classic social and political justifications of liberty—those famously advanced by Milton, Mill, and Bagehot—are partial at best and ultimately unsatisfactory. But pare Mill's concept of the self-regarding act down to its core in the idea of sanctuary, put the idea of sanctuary in the light, see clearly the relation between that idea and freedom, and it becomes possible to shape an argument against a statute proscribing advocacy of such-and-such a policy.

The argument begins by acknowledging that a free man accepts the legitimacy of law with respect to objects falling within the ambit of the law's legitimate concern, rather as Socrates accepted the jury's verdict insofar as it extended to his physical being, which Socrates believed was Athens's to dispose of as Athens saw fit. But a free man also knows that the ambit of the law's legitimate concern is limited, and that when the law seeks to act outside its proper ambit, the law becomes illegitimate and the free man's responsibility is to ignore or defy it.

How to define the ambit, where to mark out the limit, are matters on which men and women of good will may differ. Taste, personal inclination, and one's vision of the society in which one prefers to live all come into play, and this lass's utopia may be that lad's hell. Through single choice multiplied by millions a democracy defines the ambit, marks out the limit beyond which its citizens have sanctuary against the power of government. In a totalitarian state it works the other way around. The state determines how far its power shall extend, invariably determining that it extends to everything, which refusal to admit the possibility of sanctuary exactly describes the misery of its luckless subjects.

Some few of us may want a sanctuary deeper than Socrates's, extending beyond what those few would regard as "mere" matters of the spirit. O yes, guard the shores, deliver the mails, and protect the currency, one of these heroes of liberty might be heard to say to government, to achieve which ends I concede your power to legislate over me; that, however, is the limit of your legitimate concern; apart from that, everything is in sanctuary and you must leave me alone.

I will not pretend that this is a philosophy for the puny. The Grand Inquisitor told his prisoner that men dread the responsibility of choice above all: they need the comfort he, the Inquisitor, provides. That is to say, men dread freedom above all: they need the comfort of government. As Isaiah Berlin wrote in his *Four Essays on Liberty*:

> It seems unlikely that this extreme demand for liberty has ever been made by any but a small minority of highly civilized and self-conscious human beings. The bulk of humanity has certainly at most times been prepared to sacrifice this to other goals: security, status, prosperity, power, virtue, rewards in the next world; or justice, equality, fraternity, and many other values which appear wholly, or in part, incompatible with the attainment of the greatest degree of individual liberty, and certainly do not need it as a precondition for their own realization.

Most of us, I suppose, gladly forgo any claim to be thought of as heroes of liberty. But we do cherish our portion of sanctuary, the line around some parts of our lives past which the power of the state may not trespass. Whether and when we marry, what work we pursue, where (if anywhere) we find the solace of the supernatural, virtually all of us would say are matters beyond the law's intermeddling. They shelter in sanctuary. Whom we marry does not, but only so long as the law restricts itself to general rules as to the minimum age, opposite sex, and genetic separation of those who marry. Should the law presume to be specific, requiring this John to marry that Jane, the law might expect armed resistance. Who would quietly abide so gross a violation of sanctuary? Not I, say most of us, and if the vessels of the law must therefore be broken, break them.

Does freedom of speech fall within or beyond sanctuary's bounds? Once more assuming no First Amendment, the answer is, What you will. Perhaps a few among us, scripture in hand and especially fervent in their faith, would let the law burn all libraries else. Most of us have a more tempered view. Whatever the measure of sanctuary's dimension, it encompasses freedom of speech—at least, that is, the freedom to argue the merits of Democracy and Republicanism and to prefer one to the other. Ask whether sanctuary extends, say, to advocacy of the program laid down in *Mein Kampf*, or of the theory of evolution, or of the biological inequality of the races, and rather more of us are likely to be ready to draw the line: liberty, after all, is not license.

The consensus of most Americans, I should think, would be that the sanctuary accorded freedom of speech ought to be as broad as possible. Most Americans probably would agree that it should include any and every kind of speech except the outright obscene and that which raises an immediate and substantial threat of the occurrence of some evil itself beyond the farthest stretch of sanctuary and so properly within the state's power to prevent.

It is unnecessary to test the accuracy of my sur-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mise as to the American consensus because our hypothetical case, to be decided without a First Amendment, is just that: a hypothetical case. Arguing it, we would urge that advocacy of such-and-such a policy is within the bounds of sanctuary. A statute forbidding advocacy of such-and-such a policy thus violates sanctuary and is beyond the state's power to legislate. In the circumstances of things as they are rather than as we hypothesized them at the outset to be, the ample reach of the sanctuary accorded freedom of speech is commanded by the First Amendment. Cases at the margin continue to come along, certainly, and their decision by the courts is by no means easy, nor do the results command universal assent. The point is that they are marginal cases, recognized by all as such. Move away from the margin and there is little doubt or dissent. With advocacy of this political party or that, this social program or that, this artistic style or that, we are well within the bounds of sanctuary. The state's power to regulate or hinder exhausts itself out there. Here we are free.

IN THE END, we see that the good of freedom of speech has little to do with the national wealth or well-being. The arguments of Milton, of Mill, of Bagehot, arguments of social and political justification, prove ultimately unconvincing. It is the idea of sanctuary, derived from Mill's concept of the self-regarding act, which furnishes at last a defense of freedom of speech. Freedom of speech means that we can say what we want to ourselves and to each other without fear of government intrusion. The reason we need have no fear of government intrusion is that in our society freedom of speech is given sanctuary: on this ground government is forbidden to tread. Freedom of speech permits us to be the men and women we want to be rather than the men and women the state wants us to be: it lets us take Socrates for our model rather than the Grand Inquisitor's flock.

There is no justification beyond this. The utility of freedom of speech is to help us be what we may and become what we can. If such things are unimportant to you, count freedom of speech for nothing. But if such things are what makes your life worth living, freedom of speech is your intimation of immortality. That is its good.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Reflections on a Memoir

Jacob Sloan

We are lived by powers we pretend to understand.

—W. H. AUDEN

H WAS a short, erect, barrel-chested man with slightly bowed legs, close-cropped gray hair, and liquid, protruding eyes whom I got to know fairly well in Boston in the 40's and New York in the 50's. He had come to America from the Ukraine shortly after World War I, but had never reconciled himself to life in the fabled land. He was not alone in that respect, of course. A line in a popular song of the 20's, *Die Greene Kuzine* ("The Greenhorn Cousin"), cries plaintively, *"A khaleriya oyf Kolumbuses medina!"* ("A pox on Columbia, the gem of the ocean!").

But H. did not complain. A quiet, indeed timid, man, he rarely spoke of the past. It was only from his relatives that I learned that H. had actually served in the Czar's army, and that that experience had been the high point of his life. In Boston, I was told with amusement, H. never missed a military parade.

That was intriguing. I had heard family tales of young men who had fled the country when called up, or, if inducted, had deserted as soon as they could. Ivan's military service, the terrible *priziv*, was a dread prospect for Russian Jews, who could anticipate particularly cruel and unusual treatment.

Yet here was H., who looked back on that usually horrendous experience with a kind of nostalgia. I have always been a memoir buff; I approached H. and suggested that he put down on paper the story of his life.

H. readily agreed. He did not need much persuasion—his life was dull enough. He had retired from the family business many years before on a small sinecure (he was no asset, and his brothers and sister had been glad to buy him out). H.'s English was hesitant, but he was fluent and expressive in Yiddish. A man of sensibility in the mold of the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia, at the family dinner table his laugh was hearty and quick. There was more than a touch of delighted malice in his hoarse, deep voice as he recounted the foibles of townspeople in his *shtetl*. So I looked forward to a bright and lively account of an unusual life.

Several months later, shortly before his sudden death, H. presented me with a Yiddish manuscript. I glanced through it and was disappointed. H. was not a professional writer, and, like most people, he spoke more freely and vigorously than he wrote.

Shortly afterward, I went abroad on a lengthy foreign assignment. H.'s memoirs gathered dust in the warehouse where I had deposited them with the rest of my household effects. But recently, on my return to Washington, relieved of official duties, I decided to go back to H.'s memoirs. Perhaps I could find vital matter in those stiff lines. I had been fond of the dead man, both for himself and for what he stood for—a man of my father's generation. The testament of his troubled life, however stilted in expression, deserved considered reflection.

* * *

I was born in a small town [shtetl] *in the Kiev district of the Ukraine, in the southern part of Russia. The town was ringed about by wide fields and by villages, each of which was many times larger than the town itself. Far from any railroad, it was, in effect, cut off from the rest of the world.*

The classic setting. Isaac Bashevis Singer describes his fictional town of Goray as suffering from the same isolation and encirclement two centuries earlier, in the last quarter of the 17th century: Goray lay "in the midst of the hills at the end of the world."

What is novel in H.'s *shtetl* is its smallness, in comparison with the fields and villages roundabout, as well as its relative inaccessibility—*"far from any railroad."* For anyone brought up in the Jewish neighborhoods of large American cities, the realization of the actual fewness of Jews in relation to the larger city and country can come as a shock. In complete innocence, we assume that our neighborhood is not only a world unto itself—it is the whole world, in miniature. We do not think of ourselves as a small people.

JACOB SLOAN has written two books of poetry, *Generation of Journey* and *I Was, I Am*, and has contributed literary and social criticism to COMMENTARY and other periodicals. His translations from Yiddish and Hebrew include Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Satan in Goray*, Emmanuel Ringelblum's *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, and S.Y. Agnon's *Days of Awe*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then again, there is Jewish mobility. Nathan Glazer has remarked that there appear to be more Jews than there really are because Jews move about so much; they seem to be wherever you look, wherever you go. Frank Alpine, in Bernard Malamud's novel, *The Assistant,* expresses this misapprehension: "There are more of them than anyone knows."

This was far from true of the Jews in the *shtetl* where H. grew up at the end of the 19th century. They were forced into immobility by the ghettoization of a restricted Pale of Settlement, excluded from government schools by discriminatory laws, and often kept from their own religious schools by sheer poverty. With a few bleak lines H. sketches a picture of the consequences of this poverty, and how the *shtetl* endured—and transcended—it. During the long Russian winters

> *rarely did one see people in the street, for many people had no warm clothing. Small children could not go to school. People sat in their cold houses, whimpering and waiting for God to come to their aid. For it was their piety and faith that gave people the strength to endure the hard times and to hope for better ones.*

There is compassion in this sketch, and appreciation of the sustaining faith of the pious, though H. himself is not persuaded of the efficacy of passive whimpering and waiting for divine intervention. But he is equally skeptical of those who leave the country (not just the *shtetl*) to seek their fortunes elsewhere, in America. He recalls those who had come back to lord it over the stay-at-homes, and assesses with cool calculation the folly of emigrants

> *who saved up a few dollars and came back to their families. The dollar went very far in Europe at that time; in their American clothing they looked like millionaires. But in a few years they spent or lost their capital in unsuccessful business ventures. They were able to make a slight change in the lives of a few people, but in the long run they were as poor as before, as ragged, as hungry.*

THERE is, of course, envy here and rue, as well as malice. For H. himself had not dared to chance emigration. After his release from the *priziv,* he was at a loss. He could not find his bearings. He analyzes his quandary—one he was to remain in for the rest of his life:

> *Paradoxically, instead of being as delighted at the termination* [of military service] *as every other other Jewish soldier was, I was indifferent to liberation from military servitude—in fact, I was quite unhappy.... I had really nothing to return to, no proper home.... My father was poor and not making a living; my younger brothers were in America, and my younger sister was preparing to join them.... My prospects were far from glowing, and I had no idea what to do with my life. To this day I cannot understand why I so stubbornly refused to emigrate to America like the other young Jews. The land that I found it impossible to leave* [Russia] *was like an angry stepmother; its anti-Semitic laws had done me immense injury, depriving me of the opportunity to earn a decent living.*

"Russia was like an angry stepmother." The plain fact is that Mother Russia did treat her Jewish children abominably: they were indeed stepchildren, second-class citizens. And the image is particularly apt because so many young Jews like H. were literally orphaned in early childhood. In one of the most moving passages in the memoir, H. recounts his mother's last hours and her burial during a snowstorm.

Indeed, the orphan metaphor is a staple of Yiddish and Hebrew literature of that period. Some of the best writers (notably Chaim Nachman Bialik) used it brilliantly to characterize the sense of isolation and irrelevance that afflicted his generation. His *Ha-Masmid,* the orphaned yeshiva student whose talmudic candle burns feebly day and night "in a corner of the Exile," became the classic expression of the straitened religion of a once-rich society, now abandoned by an indifferent world.

Bialik was able through his art to transmute the dross of years spent in isolation and need into a golden affirmation of traditional and historic values: into Zionism, as a reassertion of the identity of nation and faith on the soil where they had originated. H. had no such talent and no such particularistic perspective: his sympathies were secular and grandiose. He believed in a social revolution from which Jews, like other oppressed people, would benefit. Judaism for him was limited to the narrow "fanaticism" of the *shtetl,* which, however hopeful for its pious devotees, was unworthy of a modern young man. Besides, he could not commit himself, directly and actively, to any cause outside himself. He could and did dream—he dreamed a good deal—but it was of a nebulous "better world a-coming."

H. dreamed, but his feet were stuck in a quagmire of *"unending, tedious, and boring despair."* Awareness of his inertia only increased the despair. His life had no meaning. He was angry and full of hate, but

> *I knew deep in my heart that hatred* [of the czarist regime] *could accomplish nothing, that my duty as a young man and as a Jew was to become active in the* [revolutionary] *struggle. But I was not a man of action, and the realization that I did not have the courage to help in the movement, like other people I knew, brought me to despair.*

Once again, H.'s lifelong anguish at his inability to act forcefully and effectively was not unique. It was part of the general malaise that afflicted *shtetl* Jewry. Even Bialik, a fulfilled artist one might think (indeed a culture hero in his own day), is said to have lapsed into the same syn-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drome of anxious apathy in his last years, though they were spent in Zionist Palestine.

It was not that the *shtetl* lacked models of Jews who overcame the limitations of Russian life and triumphed over them. Thus, H. speaks admiringly of figures like his maternal grandfather, who, though barely literate, made his way in the Gentile world by shrewd, opportunistic manipulation of absentee landlords. But he, like the famed millionaire Brodsky, was an exception. The memoir is replete with derisive anecdotes about learned but foolish, bigoted, vain, and—most important—improvident *shlemiels*.

But H. is too intelligent to fall into the vulgar trap of assuming that all failures are, *ipso facto*, unsophisticated gulls. He perceives another kind of failure, very close to home: that of the secular, enlightened, modern man who loses out because he has no head for business—his own father (and, eventually, himself). He points out that there is a large element of luck involved, too—business conditions change due to outside forces beyond one's control. And then there is one's nature, one's inner life, also beyond one's control. Things are particularly difficult for a person like himself, soft and vulnerable. All these considerations combine to make one a *shlimmazel*—i.e., a born loser, one whose luck is consistently bad, who is always at the mercy of forces beyond his control.

H.'s luck turned sour very early. First the tragic death of his young mother, who preferred him to his brothers and sister. Then, his father, noting H.'s intelligence and intellectual interests, sent him off to the home of his own father, who was a wealthy man, in the hope that this grandfather would gladly subsidize H.'s higher studies. But grandfather turned out to be a highly eccentric, benighted, miserly provincial of the old school who disapproved of a secular education for his bright eldest grandson.

Still, H. did not give up so easily. He determined to work his way through the university, earning the fees necessary for a nonresident student by tutoring the children of Jewish provincials for half of each academic year, then returning to his grandfather's house to study privately the rest of the year. He was making headway when suddenly he was called up for military service.

Surveying his life forty years later, H. might well have nodded in agreement with Isaac Bashevis Singer's satanic dictum: "It is all chance and an event of nature." His inborn nature was unalterably mild; his luck, consistently bad. But not always, not entirely. There was this one exception: the sergeant. . . .

H's ARMY experience began as miserably as predicted. He records the official czarist army policy as spelled out by the commanding officer dressed in a warm overcoat to a company of Jewish recruits shivering in meager summer cottons in the dead of winter.

"Stabbing every man of us with his malicious gray eyes," the commanding officer addresses the neophytes in a bitter-cold voice: *"I know that many of you are educated, intellectual, and competent, because that is true of Jews in general. They always want to* know *everything. . . . You people are too smart, too hostile to the government of Russia—and you are not to be trusted."*

The officer disclaims any "personal" bias. He is neutral when it comes to politics. But . . . *"my duty is to tell you that all those freethinking ideas of yours, all those revolutionary notions that fill your heads will do you absolutely no good here; to the contrary, they will be a handicap to you during your military service."* He ends by letting the cat out of the bag: *"Orders from the high command are to keep an eye on you people as a security risk."*

The commanding officer was not wrong. Jewish soldiers did have superior intelligence and they did apply themselves to beating the discriminatory system. But it was no use. The cards were stacked against them and they were repeatedly rebuffed:

> *Often a Jewish soldier would be assigned to a post that was outside the Pale of Settlement, to a place where he would ordinarily, as a civilian, be forbidden to live. He would make friends there, or fall in love with a local girl whom he wanted to marry. He would apply to the powers-that-be for permission to settle there on the grounds that as a soldier he had the right to live anywhere in Russia at the end of his military service. Invariably, such applications were denied. On the last day of his service, the Jewish soldier lost his right to free residence, and was sent back to the province of his origin, within the Pale.*

H.'s description of the scene at the railroad station at the departure of Jewish conscripts reads like a script for a classic Eisenstein film: mothers agonizing over the separation from their sons; the brutality of the police; the inexorable movement of the railroad cars:

> *The crowd—parents, friends—that had come to see us off . . . downcast, weeping faces as at a funeral . . . the loud keening of mothers, desperately clutching their sons in their arms, pressing them to their breasts, refusing to let go . . . the powerful armed policemen tearing the young men from their wailing mothers, shoving them into railroad cars . . . the shriek of the locomotive whistle as the train moves slowly forward . . . the mothers running after the train, with outstretched arms, screaming their sons' names at the top of their lungs. . . . The train has disappeared, a thick cloud of smoke covers the horizon and they keep running until they fall to earth exhausted, tearing their hair, sobbing. . . .*

"Sobbing." . . . Tears are frequent in the memoir. H. freely acknowledges weeping on many occasions: as his mother lay dying (*"my hot tears*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mingled with hers"); lying on his straw pallet unable to sleep the first night in the army barracks; on his departure from Grodno, at the end of his service, to face a bleak future. He does not apologize for his tears because they are not easy; they are justified by circumstances and by his "*nature*"—he is one of those who weep at the injustice of things, and at his own hopelessness. He cries for himself and he cries for others.

THROUGHOUT the memoir, H.'s indignant sympathies go out to two groups: to Russian Jews, of course—but also to the Russian peasants, so easily exploited by absentee landlords, kept in a state of ignorance and illiteracy, befuddled with liquor made easily available by the regime, incited to violence (against Jews) by police agents and bigoted priests who manipulate the peasants' love of Holy Russia. The peasant unhesitatingly serves in the Czar's army (until the debacle of the Russo-Japanese war). But H. understands that military service, though simply another form of the same old servitude to new masters, has concrete advantages which the peasants appreciate:

> *There was . . . a sharp contrast between the peasant serfs inside the army and those outside. Where civilian peasants went about in filthy rags, soldier peasants were resplendent in clean uniforms. The army kept them in good health so that they could fight.*

Still, peasant and Jew can help one another even in the army. It is a peasant sergeant who affords H. an escape from the rigors of Russian army life—and the opportunity to live what, amazingly, are to be the happiest days of his life. As luck would have it, the very same education that the czarist regime distrusts in its Jewish population proves to be H.'s salvation.

His rescue comes out of the blue, after only two months of the odious barracks life, the drudgery, boredom, demeaning anxiety ("*to please our superior officers, we scanned their faces for indications of what it was they now desired*"). His top sergeant

> *made a fearsome impression. A tall, powerful, fair-haired man with piercing blue eyes, he was the stereotype of a regular in the czar's army. The severity of the face, the strong, harsh, bass voice shouting orders—every move, every gesture . . . in the reactionary Russian army mold. But how wrong I was!*

One very cold day, H. is called into the sergeant's office, whither he marches at double time in fear and trembling ("*What had I done wrong? What would be the punishment?*"). To his astonishment, the sergeant gives H. permission to sit down—a clear breach of discipline, which permitted no fraternization between ranks, however private the occasion.

But after a few words, the mystery is solved. Looking through H.'s records, which have just come to his desk from staff headquarters, the sergeant has discovered that H. was graduated from the *Gymnasium* with high honors. And now the sergeant asks H. as a personal favor ("*no one must know of this*") to help him out in his own studies. He is bucking for a promotion and is weak in mathematics—which it just so happens is H.'s strong subject. In return for this hush-hush service, the sergeant offers to do everything in his power to make life in the service easier for his Jewish tutor.

H. hastens to agree. He becomes a porter assigned to the sergeant's office. There he alternates between pushing a broom when others are around and tutoring his pupil-master when they are alone. (It is a Chaplinesque alternation of roles that H. finds comical "*to this day.*") When his sergeant passes his exams, he keeps his word and rewards H. with a sinecure assignment as medical orderly in a hospital in the large city of Grodno.

There, relieved of barracks restrictions, in his liberal free time, H. quickly becomes part of a group of "*intelligent, well-read, and friendly*" young Jewish men and women. He joins them in their summertime outings, picnics, songfests (to the accompaniment of the guitar), boating. During the winter they go skating together, visit the Yiddish theater, the movies—and meet in their homes for "*readings or political discussions.*"

Ah, those halcyon days! They explain why H. had such fond recollections of his peacetime service in the Czar's army. Those two years were the high spot of his life. They were the one time when all his needs—for security, companionship, status—were taken care of. And all because of a peasant Russian sergeant and his own superior education, however incomplete. The world was not completely dark.

WHAT were those political discussions held in private homes by the Grodno Jewish youth group? In telling the story of his life, H. devotes at least half of his memoir to the public life of the times, as seen from a "*progressive*" standpoint. (In Boston, H. shared the sentimental Communism of the readers of *Morgen Freiheit*, even after the Soviet purge trials of the Stalin period.) He writes of the background of the pogroms, of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 and its revolutionary aftermath—the short-lived Duma, the assassination of the "*dreaded*" premier Stolypin.

This is the stuff of textbook history. But H. enlivens the familiar outlines with anecdotes and "inside" information—the underground rumors of the times. This is second- and third-hand material, not formal history checked and double-checked against "reliable" sources. It is not data; it is only "what people say," often inaccurate, always tendentious, but all the more important for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

its indication of what people are ready to believe and to repeat.

Equally important are the events H. does not report. Nowhere in his memoir is there reference to two major movements among the Jewish intellectuals of Russia at that period, each of which addressed both the "Jewish question" and the larger socioeconomic ones: Zionism and Jewish socialism. The Grodno discussion groups must have argued over those burning issues of the day. The Zionist and Jewish socialist movements had become active in response to the wave of pogroms that swept Russia in the 1880's, after the assassination of Czar Alexander II. They were in full swing a generation later, when H. was a young man serving in the army.

Abraham Cahan, the long-time editor of the socialist and later social-democratic *Jewish Daily Forward* newspaper in New York, describes in his own autobiography the lively debate in Russia in the pages of three Russian-language Jewish weeklies between proponents of two parties, the "Americans" (Am Olam) and the "Palestinians" (BILU). As a result of the 1881 pogroms (in the Ukraine, where H. lived), Cahan explains, "a section of the young Jewish intellectuals concluded that Russia could never be a home for Jews, and that it was necessary to find a true home for the Jewish people elsewhere. But where? Some were for America, others advocated Palestine. The nationalist movement began to make inroads among young Russian Jewish intellectuals at that time. . . . However, the proportion of nationalists to the total Jewish intellectual movement was inconsiderable." Cahan himself, facing the choice of flight to America or to Palestine, chose America—explaining that he was a socialist and did not believe in the Palestine solution.

H. speaks only in general terms of the politics of the underground dissidents whom he so admires—though it is clear from his nomenclature (*"masses," "exploitation"*) that he was influenced by Marxist as well as populist ideology. One incident in the memoir points to the non-Jewish provenance of his sympathies. The same sergeant who was his benefactor confides to H. that as a child he had been enlightened by an itinerant carpenter who had visited his village. The carpenter went out of his way to instruct bright peasant children in their ABC's and—more than incidentally—in the tenets of revolution. He was eventually picked up by the secret police and imprisoned as a member of the underground Narodnaya Volya movement, which believed in (and practiced) "going back to the people" (i.e., the peasants). The sergeant himself had joined the Russian army in order to bore from within, rising from the ranks in preparation for the revolution. H. surmises that the sergeant *"was one of the many Russian officers who at the end of World War I played an important role in the Russian army's overthrow of the Czar and the destruction of the monarchist regime."*

H.'s preference for the Narodniki is supported by Abraham Cahan's note that many young Jews of this period were attracted by the Narodnikis' terrorist program.

Zion makes but one appearance in the memoir, and that a pathetic and derisive one. In telling the story of one of his *shlemiel* uncles, a typical ex-yeshiva student incompetent at business and hence unable to support his family, H. comments:

> *He was something of a know-it-all and it hurt his pride no end to look like a comic fool. . . . Impecunious, he saw himself burdened with small children and a nagging wife. He could not endure the ignominy. One fine summer night, he told his family that he was going out for a walk and some fresh air and didn't come back.*

His uncle goes off to Palestine, to spend the remaining years of his life studying in the Holy Land. But three years later, he turns up again in the *shtetl*, unnerved and depressed, in a persistent state of melancholy. Suddenly, he falls sick and dies before he is forty.

H has no patience with pious fools, but he knows very well from his own experience the pain of humiliation, of social depreciation. He applies this psychological insight to an explanation of Russian political-social actions. It was *"a decent respect for the opinion of mankind"* that impelled czarist Russia to free its serfs:

> *Russia in the second half of the 19th century could no longer look with indifference at the consequences of the important changes taking place in the outside world: the French Revolution, in whose aftermath despotic monarchies were overthrown all over Europe, and the American Civil War, which culminated in the freeing of the Negro slaves. The struggle for freedom throughout the civilized world cast fear in the hearts of the Russian autocracy. They felt that international public opinion opposed them, that they were regarded everywhere as barbaric, wild Asiatics.*

This sounds culturally correct; the student of the Russian language learns very clearly that the epithet *ni-kulturniye* ("uncultured," i.e., barbaric) is both condescending and insulting.

Equally convincing is H.'s summary of the gist of sermons preached from the pulpit against the "Christ-killers" during the celebration of Easter:

> *After the customary service, the priest would deliver a long sermon. He would preach that the Jews were a danger to the Fatherland and the Czar. They were unbelievers and hostile to the holy Russian religion. It was the duty of every citizen to keep a sharp eye on his Jewish neighbors. They must be placed under*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

close supervision. They were all, great and small, every man, woman, and child of them, all revolutionaries and criminals. Every person possessing information about suspicious Jewish activity should inform the police immediately. This report would enable the police to arrest the suspect in time to prevent disaster.

H. follows with a detailed, circumstantial account of the careful preparations for the pogrom: the pleading, self-serving arguments of Jewish community notables (*"we are not* all *malcontents"*); the hypocritical promises of protection offered by city officials (with instructions in their pockets from Moscow *not* to intervene); the dilemma of helpless Jewish army recruits forced to look on during the pogrom: *"There they stood, heads downcast, tears in their eyes, nervously pressing the rifles in their hands. How easily they could have dispatched this riff-raff. . . . With loathing they regarded the smiling faces of their officers, who had ordered them not to interfere, whatever happened."*

This has the true ring of first-hand observation —particularly the impotent rage of Jewish soldiers nervously pressing their rifles. But one is not sure that H.'s ideological bias has not distorted his reporting when he goes on to explain why the chief victims of the pogroms were the workers and shopkeepers living in the poorer Jewish neighborhoods. The regime, he declares, considered those Jews to be the most inimical because they were more likely to be dissatisfied with the oppressive system that kept them in poverty. The richer Jews, he argues, were generally protected from the effects of the pogroms. They were considered more loyal to the regime; they would identify with the upper class, whose interests the regime defended. So the police drove away any hooligans who showed up in the wealthier Jewish neighborhoods, and even went so far as to arrest them.

One suspects rather that the police were *bribed* to protect the better-off Jews, who were distrusted and hated as much as were the poorer ones. After all, the underground dissidents and revolutionaries themselves came, as always, from the middle and upper classes, and were university students and graduates, the children of the *"richer neighborhoods,"* rather than of poor shopkeepers—and the czarist regime knew this very well, just as the present-day Soviet regime knows that its opposition comes from the brains of its society, the Sakharovs and Solzhenitsyns, not from the brawn. It is the ordinary worker who can be coopted by free or very cheap vacation resorts, deafened into insensibility and drunkenness by unremitting propaganda, intimidated by threats of concentration camps and loss of jobs—not the Brodskys and Sinyavskys. And indeed, H. makes this quite clear elsewhere in speaking of the revolutionary propaganda leaflets smuggled into Russia from abroad and distributed to indifferent "masses" in factories and public places:

Most of the people who found this literature, distributed at risk to life and limb, refused to read it. The ignorant masses spat on the pamphlets and trod them underfoot as the work of Jews, the bitter enemy of the Fatherland, who were always preaching anarchy and revolution.

BUT the revolutionaries have their day during the 1905 revolution. H. describes underground leaders, who had come into the open after years of lying low, addressing mass audiences *"proudly, with heads high"* (one is reminded of the familiar enormous posters of Lenin, beard jutting, head thrust forward). H. had a good eye for significant detail (in retirement, he painted careful decorative tiles).

Czar Nicholas II is represented as *"that half-mad, idiotic, alcoholic figurehead"* who obdurately refuses to sign the manifesto granting a Duma until *"eventually on the third day of the general strike, his counselors got the Czar dead drunk and prevailed on him to sign the manifesto."* So much for Hollywood's *Anastasia* sentimentalism!

H.'s account of the assassination of Czar Nicholas's *"much-hated"* premier Stolypin is melodramatic. Stolypin accompanies the Czar to a patriotic opera being offered in Kiev on the occasion of the Czar's visit. Police, militia, detectives both inside and outside the opera house. Everyone is frisked. Despite these precautions, at the beginning of the third act, a young man springs up in the front row, pistol in outstretched hand, runs to the Czar's loge where Stolypin is sitting at his master's side, and fires two shots, wounding the premier fatally. Panic breaks out. Women scream and faint. The audience begins running toward the exits. But disaster is averted by the patriotic presence of mind of the *"artistes"* on stage: they fall to their knees and, turning to the pale, frightened Czar, sing the national anthem, "God Save the Czar"!

H. fills in the background of this extraordinary event with details that are both lurid and homely. The assassin was a university student, member of an underground cell, who had been assigned to murder Stolypin. He had managed to infiltrate the police—hence the singular permission granted him as a secret agent to carry a pistol into the opera house. H. adds parenthetically that the assassin was the son of a rich sugar-factory owner—perhaps a hint that this university student was a Jew as well (early in his memoir H. has told us of Jewish sugar-factory entrepreneurs in southern Russia). His final comment on the event is ruefully realistic: *"Unfortunately, Stolypin's death did little to improve matters. The Czar's friends and advisers easily chose from among themselves another premier of the same ilk as Stolypin."*

Nevertheless, ignoring the ineffectiveness of their violent tactics, the terrorists (like their counterparts nowadays) resume their activities—and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the authorities respond in kind, in the familiar pattern:

> *To raise money for the underground activity, the movement carried out forays on banks and post offices. The attacks were well-planned, and large sums of money were taken. There was a flare-up of revolts and attacks on the police. The police, militia, spies, and agents provocateurs were kept busy. So many were arrested that the government had to build new prisons.*

Ten years later, World War I breaks out. It finds H. struggling in the pharmacy he had set up in his father's home in the *shtetl*. For a second time, the Russian army disrupts H.'s attempts at an orderly, productive life. He had been called into service in 1908 while he was studying as a university extern, his education permanently halted. Now, six years later, news of the war comes to a completely unprepared *shtetl* and to a fearful young man desperately trying to keep his head above water:

> *One fine summer day in July 1914 when I got up in the morning and stepped outside, I gathered that something untoward had happened. The streets were full of people. It was hectic. People milled about, despair in their eyes, talking. They stood in front of posters that bore the tragic announcement: Russia has declared war on Germany. It was incomprehensible to us. In czarist Russia, the newspapers printed very little news about world politics. The country's foreign policy was never explained. Now, suddenly, war had been declared, and no one was prepared.*

Soon after this point the memoirs come to an end. H. is called up as a noncombatant medical orderly and is temporarily quartered in a large monastery awaiting assignment. The monks feed the soldiers ample portions of wholesome vegetarian food. We never learn what happened to H. during and immediately after the war, whether or not he ever came under fire. Did he eventually return to the *shtetl* which he had left in the same state of isolation and immobility as on the day he was born? What happened when the long-awaited revolution finally came? He left the country in the early 20's; his anticipations of a new life must have been dashed in the turmoil and uncertainty of that period. Still, the family word is that H. left Mother Russia, that angry stepmother of his, very, very reluctantly.

In 1920, at about the same time that H. half-heartedly left Russia for America, the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, who abominated America as the country from which "empty, indifferent things crowded over to us, counterfeit things, the veriest dummies," was writing in a series of letters about H.'s two preoccupations: the Russian peasant and the "Jewish dilemma."

Some twenty years earlier, Rilke had accompanied Lou-Andreas Salomé, the celebrated intellectual, intimate of Nietzsche, disciple of Freud, and Rilke's lifelong confidante, on a visit to her native land, Russia. That visit was to be the capstone of his life. The patient faith of the Russian peasant, which H. regarded as sadly symptomatic of the peasant's enslavement by state and church, Rilke interpreted as a symbol of sublimated independence. Russia, Rilke wrote, had become

> my spiritual home. . . . The Russian has shown me in so and so many instances how even an enslavement and a visitation that continually overwhelms all powers of resistance need not necessarily bring about a degeneration of the soul. There exists, at least in the soul of the Slav, a degree of submission which deserves the epithet perfect because even under the most massive and annihilating pressures it creates for the soul a secret arena, a fourth dimension in which, however grievous conditions become, a new, endless, and genuinely independent freedom can now begin.

Rilke believed that his own experiences as a schoolboy at a "brutal" military high school attested to that fourth dimension of genuine freedom. At St. Polten's, he wrote to a one-time instructor, though seemingly buried under "a solid mass of misery," he had yet "accomplished a similar absolute surrender." He could not "point to any *other* means by which I could have survived that monstrous, over-life-size injustice." He had early been influenced by Dostoevsky (a visit to Tolstoy was unsatisfactory) and now, despite the triumph of the Bolsheviks, he accepted Dostoevsky's daughter's

> most marvelous and visionary interpretation of the present state of things in Russia: the Russian moujik, who is the enduring and constructive element of Russia, is already at work creating vast and profound relationships with the East, and Bolshevism is only being used as a "scarecrow" to hold off the Westerner and his destructive and interfering dogmatism. . . . Things must come sooner or later, and then the whole world will have to stand and pause. Of all future movements . . . this will be the most magnificent and the most just.

Rilke had been deeply stirred by the sight of the Russian monk, whose historic, communal, unmediated religion (*not* faith) he perceived to be a purer, more authentic form of spiritual life than his mother's conventional, pseudo-aristocratic Central European Catholic monasticism. In a letter to a Jewish friend, Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, Rilke linked the Greek Orthodox Russian with the Arab and the Jew as "an example of [the] grandeur and dignity" of one "favored by the inborn unity of his nationhood and religion, which time and again has secured him an obvious advantage." Rilke asserted his "indescribable trust in those peoples who have come up against God NOT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through faith, but who experienced God through their own nationhood, in their own tribal sources. Like the Jews, the Arabs, and to a certain extent the Orthodox Russian—and then, in a different way, the people of the East and of ancient Mexico. For them God is Origin and hence also Future."

At the time Rilke wrote this letter, a Jewish homeland in Palestine was a burning issue of the day. (Perhaps Frau Blumenthal-Weiss had asked him what he thought of Zionism.) Rilke had obviously given the "Jewish question" considerable thought. The situation of European Jews was in many ways very much like his own. (W. H. Auden, whose early work shows clear evidence of Rilke's influence, was to write of modern poets: "We are all Jews.") Of Austrian origin, Rilke, like Franz Kafka, had grown up in Prague. Like Kafka, he was a member of a German-speaking and -writing minority in a society that was historically Czech. He shared with Kafka and understood perfectly the sense of confinement, isolation, estrangement, and marginality of an ethnic minority in Central Europe. And like Kafka, too, he was impressed by the possibilities of Zionism.

In his writings, Rilke refers time and again to the overriding significance of the Old Testament; for him, the religious implications of the return of the Chosen People to the Promised Land had an importance for both God and the world like the Bolshevik revolution, that "scarecrow" set up by the Russian moujik to scare off Western materialism.

This was not grandiose persiflage for Rilke; it was part of his deepest intuition. For Rilke was a mystic God-seeker; he sought in his poetry to unite his own inner, personal reality with external, spiritual reality. In a poem written in the late autumn of 1899, a few months after his return from "Holy Russia," he had identified the presence of God with his own physical existence. This remarkable poem begins, *Was wirst du tun, Gott, wenn ich sterbe?* ("What will you do, God, when I die?")

Rilke's letter to Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss is in the medieval Church tradition, with its melancholy persuasion of the "spiritual vagrancy" of the Wandering Jew, and of the "distortions . . . wayward, perverse obstinacy" of the "race" that had refused to acknowledge the divinity of its greatest son. But it concludes with an ungrudging admiration for the strength of Jewish "endurance" and an anticipation that the growth of the Jewish people on the new-old soil of Palestine would produce a new "massy harvest . . . an irresistible fruitfulness in God." The parallel with the Russian moujik in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution is, as we have noted, more than incidental.

H OF COURSE did not think in such exalted, world-encompassing terms. He was neither a visionary poet, nor an ardent nationalist, nor a revolutionary activist, only a modest man whose ordinary, everyday need—to be a productive, self-respecting citizen in his native country—was frustrated on every hand by the anti-Semitic policy of Rilke's Holy Russia. True, H. was not a forceful person; but many shy people can and do get along perfectly well in the sheltered environment of a civilized society. Eventually, he did emigrate to America, but it was too late. By then he was a broken man, and life here was freer but much too hard for a frightened newcomer. There were many immigrants like him, as Oscar Handlin has reminded us.

Would H. have done better in Palestine? One doubts it. To him Zion was out of the question. It was the refuge of those who lived in the past, the place to which a ne'er-do-well uncle had fled, abandoning wife and children, when his pathetic pride was hurt, and whence he had returned, broken and discouraged, to a youthful *shtetl* death. There was, of course, another path open in Palestine for idealistic young colonists determined to build a socialist cooperative society based on agriculture. But life was just as hard in the early Zionist days in Palestine as it was in New York; read the accounts of the pioneers of the first kibbutzim and other settlements, and of their tribulations: malaria, marauding Arabs, stony soil.

It was even harder later on for those who came not out of a burning conviction but out of necessity, out of an absence of choice. Theodor Herzl's noted dictum, "If you will it, it is no legend," assumes a direct connection between the personal, natural will and national, supernatural goals. But this connection also presupposes a third element: a willed faith—if not a spiritual affirmation of God's living and continual presence, then a general humanistic conviction that life has meaning.

Like most people, H. had no such faith, willed or otherwise. He anticipated no miracles being performed for him. Outside his native land, the land of his childhood and young manhood, even of his military service, his external life could have no meaning that might redeem his shattered inner life. The revolution that had come to Russia had not revolutionized his life.

Indeed, so far, Rilke's prophecy of the spiritual redemption of the world through a post-Bolshevik revolutionary renascence led by Russian Orthodox peasantry and a Jewish post-biblical revival of a fundamentally national religion on ancestral soil, has not been realized. Dostoevsky, Solzhenitsyn, and Andrei Sinyavsky in Russia, and Ahad Ha-Am, Martin Buber, and A.D. Gordon in Israel, who shared similar visions, remain prophets without honor in their own lands.

Rilke himself, tragically, could not accomplish what Buber terms "the turning" to God.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rilke speaks of God as being at the center of all great embracing religions, like Judaism: "And Man, who lives at the outermost periphery of such a circle, *belongs* to this mighty center, even though he has only once, perhaps at dying, turned his face toward it." But Rilke himself refused a priest as *he* lay dying.

Indeed, one senses in the lives and works of visionaries like Rilke an attempt to relive and revive a world that no longer exists or can exist—and they know it in the back of their minds (perhaps because it never did exist). In their over-insistence on the need to believe (though not on the leap of faith), to forge a new-old identity, to recreate an idealized past, we see an emphasis on the irresistible force of will that real life daily contradicts, for us as it did for H. *Pace* William James, the will to believe is not enough. H. was right: our fates are determined by our history, our nature, and—in the final analysis—by our individual luck.

Bruno Bettelheim and Victor Frankl have both described how, during the Holocaust, those victims who were profoundly committed to some transcendent idea—of God or of ideology or of ultimate meaning or even of a personal goal—were best able to keep their integrity intact. True. Yet in the final analysis neither such a commitment nor any lesser strength of mind or of body was decisive for survival. Fortune was, as ever, fickle. It did not matter how shrewd you were, how good a worker, what excellent connections you had. If you happened to be standing on a certain streetcorner when an SS man or guard got it into his head to shoot at the next person he saw and you were the person he saw, you were shot. The next person on that spot, however inferior to you, escaped. Of course, the true believer in another world or another life is not impressed with the value of survival—or of success—for its own sake. But for persons like H. and the multitudes who share his preoccupation with the here and now, consistently bad luck does matter.

THE Englishman Leonard Woolf's Edwardian ambience was completely different from that of his Russian-Jewish cousin, H., although for both men the period immediately preceding and following World War I was crucial in their development. H. too would have characterized himself, as Woolf did, as "mentally, morally, and physically a coward." But where H. was an unknown nonentity, Woolf achieved a considerable contemporary reputation. We think of him nowadays, glancingly, as the stable support of his unbalanced but gifted wife, Virginia. But Leonard Woolf was in his own right an ardent Cambridge intellectual in the circle of the philosopher G.E. Moore. He was also a vigorous officer in the British imperial service, who would have won the highest distinction had he not left after seven years in Ceylon, in revulsion at Britain's imperialistic policy. He became an imaginative formulator of the internationalist idea of a League of Nations, and—more than incidentally—a successful publisher of the Hogarth Press, which introduced literary moderns like T.S. Eliot to avant-garde readers. All in all, one might think, a man to be satisfied with his life, where action and intelligence had happily combined.

Yet in the introduction to the third volume of his autobiography, written at a ripe old age, Leonard Woolf speculates with a moving pathos on the very same theme we see underlying H.'s memoir: how our personal history screens our view of reality, perhaps obscuring it completely. Woolf begins by quoting a verse from Rilke, then goes on to relate it to the universal human inability to comprehend the world:

> *Sein Blick ist vom Vorübergehn der Stäbe*
> *so müd geworden, dass er nichts mehr hält.*
> *Ihm ist, als ob es tausend Stäbe gäbe*
> *und hinter tausend Stäben keine Welt.*
>
> ("His gaze from going through the bars has grown so weary that it can take in nothing more. For him it is as though there were a thousand bars and behind the thousand bars no world.")
>
> —Rilke, *Der Panther*

I have often been haunted by the lines from Rilke's superb poem, *Der Panther*. This volume is the record of my life during the first great war and all through the war one felt that one was behind bars, and now recalling those years it seems to me that one was looking at the world and one's own life through bars. But then another thought, a terrible doubt, came to me. There are other bars, permanent bars of the cage of one's life, through which one has always and will always gaze at the world. The bars of one's birth and family and ancestors, of one's school and college, of one's own secret and sinuous psychology. Has not my mind, my soul, if I have a soul, for the last eighty-two years been pacing up and down like the panther, backward and forward, behind these bars and gazing through them until, so weary, I have seen, not the world or life, but only the bars—a thousand bars and behind the thousand bars no world?

H. would certainly have agreed that he was not alone in his failure to come to terms with, much less to dominate, the reality of his faulty character, horrendous times, implacable misfortune. And we, successful or not, lucky or unlucky, as human beings pace with Rilke, Woolf, and H. the same panther's cage of history through whose bars we gaze at an uncertain reality.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Treason Chic

Richard Grenier

TREASON is in style. At least British treason. Or at least British treason when it is committed by Englishmen with posh accents wearing old Etonian ties. There is something poignant, and nostalgic, and bittersweet about it—to the point where all three of the leading British film imports into the U.S. in the last several months have wildly romanticized fictional creations suggested by the lives of Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, and Kim Philby, Britain's three most famous, and infamous, traitors of the last half-century. And cultural despair is all in style, British cultural despair, that is, and even British cultural despair transposed, as in John le Carré's *The Little Drummer Girl*, which Hollywood has just turned into a big-budget movie starring Diane Keaton.

Some twenty years ago I noticed in West Germany a cover line on a magazine which read, *Warum Kulturpessimismus?* ("Why Cultural Pessimism?"). Since that time, of course, the German intellectual classes have moved to the Left. The French—apparently always odd men out—have moved to the Right. America has moved first one way and then the other. British intellectuals and semi-intellectuals, curiously enough, have moved in the same direction as the Germans. With no Vietnam war and no Watergate, large sections of British elite opinion have lost contact with the mass of the population as thoroughly as any U.S. McGovernite. (During the recent Falklands war fair numbers of self-styled British intellectual "leaders" were wandering about in bafflement saying, "Who *are* all these patriotic people?")

The British cinema, nothing if not modish, reflects accurately the attitudes of the UK's own Yuppies and pre-Yuppies—a very close sociological equivalent of America's movie audience. But whereas America's radical-Left film-makers content themselves with movies implying that the Rosenbergs were innocent, or that the Sandinistas in Nicaragua are splendid fellows —and even these fail miserably at the box office—Britain's movie industry has recently produced a quite remarkable genre, a special subdivision of cultural despair that I can only call Treason Chic. Who would have anticipated that any fragment of British opinion would ever bathe in the roseate glow of fond memory some of Britain's most heinous traitors, men who joined the enemy and placed their country in mortal danger, and one of whom (Guy Burgess) may have been responsible for the deaths of thousands of American soldiers in Korea? But it has come to pass.

The first example of Britain's new Treason Chic is *Another Country*, about which I have already written ("From Eton to Havana," COMMENTARY, September 1984). Inspired quite openly by the life of Guy Burgess, the film, which opened in New York last summer, is essentially an ode to the beauties of homosexuality accompanied by a self-pitying lament over some minor disappointment suffered by the Burgess character at public school. If the film means anything at all, it means that any country beastly enough to inconvenience its homosexuals rather deserves to be betrayed, and that Burgess's behavior in becoming a Soviet agent and eventually defecting to Moscow was not only comprehensible but in the last analysis justified.

I HAD no idea when I saw *Another Country* that it was to begin a whole new style, but before many weeks had passed we received from Britain *The Jigsaw Man*, starring Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. If *Another Country* is an "artistic" film (whose claim to quality rests heavily on its *Town and Country*-style photography), *The Jigsaw Man* is a "big" movie, an action thriller. But it, too, has its celebrated traitor, in this case patterned plainly on Kim Philby. The story begins in Moscow, where we meet an elderly British defector (and former Soviet agent in his own country), played by an actor of appropriate age with Michael Caine's voice (dubbed). The Kremlin is about to send him back to Britain on a thrilling mission and in order to escape detection he is given plastic surgery. To the amazement of one and all, the character emerges from surgery looking like Michael Caine at his true age.

The plot is trashy, as is usual in this sort of film, and really not worth recounting in detail except for two turns. Shortly after returning to England, the Philby character (Caine) encounters the head of British intelligence (MI-5), played by Olivier, who does not at first recognize him, due to the surgery and a Russian accent. But when he finally does, they greet each other like old comrades in arms. The reaction of the director of MI-5 at discovering his antagonist's true identity is, more or less, Oh, you devil! You rascal! You scamp! This for a man who has committed high treason.

But Caine-Philby is not really a bad fellow, you see. In fact, suspecting that his Kremlin masters plan to "terminate" him once he gives them the list of Soviet-British double agents he has come for, he decides to double-cross *them*

RICHARD GRENIER *is* COMMENTARY*'s regular film critic. His novel,* The Marrakesh One-Two, *has just been published in paperback by Penguin.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and sell the list to the highest bidder, escaping afterward with the loot to Switzerland. Since the head of MI-5 is onto his game, Caine-Philby offers to cut him in on the deal. They will *both* sell the list to the highest bidder, *both* escape to Switzerland. The movie ends with the two men laughing riotously, clearly in accord. They are both rascals, it turns out, both scamps.

Americans who do not specialize in these matters may not know that the director of MI-5 during the crucial years was a man named Sir Roger Hollis, who, as it happens, fell under heavy suspicion of being a Soviet agent himself, the mole of moles. Sir Roger—elusive as ever—has since died, but those who knew him best in MI-5 are convinced of his guilt, a fact which no doubt suggested the Olivier character in *The Jigsaw Man*. It is almost impossible to imagine this story transposed to an American setting. Alger Hiss as, first, a Soviet agent, and, further, a *lovable* Soviet agent? Although *The Jigsaw Man* is pretty small beer as films go these days, it must be admitted that, even in an "entertainment" movie, the lovable traitor is a novelty, perhaps even a historic novelty.

THE third of these Treason-Chic movies is *An Englishman Abroad*, directed by one of Britain's most gifted film-makers, John Schlesinger (*Darling*, *Midnight Cowboy*), and starring Alan Bates. Skillful, witty, well-acted, well written (by Alan Bennett), it has come to America as a television movie on PBS's Great Performances series, but is a far superior piece of work to either of the two earlier films.*

An Englishman Abroad tells us, once again, the story, or part of the story, of Guy Burgess—who is decidedly the figure most beloved by the Treason-Chic set. This time, although the film's authors admit to having concocted "imaginary incidents," the Guy Burgess character is called, in all simplicity, Guy Burgess.

It seems that sometime in 1958 a young Australian actress named Coral Browne went with the Old Vic to Moscow, where—pure chance—she encountered Burgess, who had defected to the Soviet Union seven years before. Burgess, always something of a *canaille*, came bursting into her dressing room unannounced and threw up three times in her washbowl. But he had "bags of charm," reported Miss Browne, and I confess that if Burgess succeeded in captivating her while intermittently vomiting in her washbowl he must have been charming indeed. Burgess (a flaming homosexual) invited Miss Browne to lunch, which turned out to be a squalid affair in his grubby little Moscow flat. Burgess sailed through it with superb aplomb, as if he were in the Reform Club in London's West End or even Buckingham Palace. The brazen Burgess had an objective, however. He could not bear Soviet clothing, and had Miss Browne measure him for some new suits from his old Savile Row tailor.

Some twenty-five years after the event, Miss Browne told this story to author Bennett, who determined to write it as a screenplay. The result is *An Englishman Abroad*. Since the age of the actress is immaterial to the plot, Miss Browne plays herself in the movie, although the years have promoted her to Gertrude in *Hamlet* (possibly from Ophelia).

THE film has an unusually ironic beginning. While a huge poster portrait of Joseph Stalin fills the screen, we hear a tinny, English rendition of the American Tin Pan Alley favorite, "Who—stole my heart away? Who—makes me dream all day?" Since by 1958 all the portraits of Stalin were down in Moscow (and his mummy was soon to be yanked unceremoniously from its resting place beside that of Lenin on Red Square), the juxtaposition of Stalin and the supremely silly "Who Stole My Heart Away?" is thematic, plainly symbolizing the romantic shallowness of most Western Communists' understanding of the Soviet state.

In the movie, Stalin's portrait is succeeded on the screen by those of Marx, Engels, and Lenin ("Dreams I know will never come true. Who—stole my heart away?"), these last three mounted on the front of a Moscow theater. Within, the Old Vic company performs *Hamlet*, Coral Browne playing Gertrude, while in the house sits Guy Burgess, gradually growing queasy with drink, and our story is under way.

Alan Bates's Burgess is a true virtuoso performance, one of the finest I have ever seen from him. His cleverness, unscrupulousness, rudeness, wit—all with the impeccable accent and demeanor of the well-born Englishman of the period—have an uncannily authentic ring. "I'm sure I'm not the first person to remark on your pronounced resemblance to the late Ernest Bevin," he tells the *babushka* guarding the stage door. "You could be sisters." At lunch he brightly pumps Miss Browne for London gossip: "Do you see Harold Nicolson? . . . What about Cyril Connolly? Auden, do you know him? Pope-Hennessy? . . . Do you know Auden?" "You asked me. No," answers Miss Browne, who evidently knows no one worth knowing.

Coral Browne herself seems far from sympathetic toward Communism, although, given the fact that Khrushchev's "secret" speech to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist party had revealed to the world two years earlier the true nature of the Stalinist state, her condemnation is somewhat superficial. "If this is Communism I don't like it because it's *dull*! The poor things look so tired," she says. "Some people think Australia's dull. . . . And look at *Leeds*!" At one point she tells Burgess, "I'm only an actress, not a bright lady by your standards." And we can believe it.

As for Burgess, Alan Bates's brilliant, highly entertaining charactor portrayal never seemed to me to jar with the Stalin-Stole-My-

* It is not universally realized that theatrical movies and television movies are an identical product, both shot on 35 mm. film stock, the only difference being that television movies are generally made on a smaller budget and are doomed to have their main showing on an inferior projection system. Nonetheless, "regular" movies almost always end up on television, and exceptional television films, such as those of Sweden's Ingmar Bergman, frequently have a "theatrical release" in foreign countries.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Heart-Away theme. I am perfectly willing to concede that Burgess was a charming, outrageous scalawag—which wouldn't have deterred me in the least from wishing him hanged if he'd been seized in time.

BUT imagine my surprise at the manner in which the story unfolds after Miss Browne's return to London. She goes first to Burgess's tailor and is received with courtesy, sympathy, and discretion. "How is Mr. Burgess? . . . He was one of our more colorful customers. Too little color in our drab lives these days," says the shop assistant. "Mum's the word," cautions Miss Browne. The assistant replies, "Mum is always the word here. Moscow or Maidenhead, mum is always the word."

So far, so good. But then Miss Browne receives a letter from Burgess asking her to order some pajamas from his old haberdasher. Here things do not go smoothly, the assistant informing her politely that Mr. Burgess's account is closed. "The gentleman is a traitor, Madame." At this point Miss Browne's voice rises into the fishwife range, causing other customers' heads to turn. "Suppose someone commits adultery in your precious pajamas. . . . What happens when he orders his next pair of jim-jams? Is it sorry, no can do?" she shrills. (The equation of adultery with treason is interesting.) "Jesus Christ, you were happy to satisfy this man when he was one of the most notorious buggers in London! . . . But he was in the Foreign Office then! [screeching now] It's pricks like you that make me understand why he went!"

Come again? as Miss Browne might say. It's because of people who know a traitor for a traitor that Guy Burgess became a traitor? And this is the film's climactic, epiphanic moment, followed only by a sequence in which Burgess struts about Moscow among the ill-dressed Russians in his new Savile Row suit to the tune of the famous Gilbert and Sullivan ditty, "For He Is an Englishman" ("But in spite of all temptations/To belong to other nations/He remains an Englishman/He remains an Englishman")—which in context seems to say fondly that an English gentleman is still an English gentleman even if he does commit treason. This implies exactly the indulgence that so enraged Britain at the time of the great defections: that members of the British upper class were more loyal to each other than they were to their country.

A SIXTH sense tells me that the scene in the haberdasher's did not take place, that it is one of those "imaginary incidents" about which the film's titles have the decency to warn us. I do not believe that an Old Vic actress would have screeched out the word "prick" in a fashionable Bond Street haberdashery in the 50's—particularly since, in that decade, the word was still largely an Americanism. I also do not believe that a person would have mounted a screaming public defense of a British traitor in that period. In 1958 British troops had been (successfully) fighting a Communist insurgency in Malaya for a full decade under both Labor and Conservative governments, and the patriotism of World War II was still very much alive.

In the 30's, it is worth recalling, the greatest of British music-hall entertainers was Gracie Fields, beloved, especially by Britain's working classes, as "Our Gracie." When the Luftwaffe bombs began to fall, however, Miss Fields, not even volunteering to entertain the troops, fled to America. The war over and the victory won, she returned to England and opened a new show at one of London's largest music halls—to an empty house. She had abandoned her countrymen in their hour of need and they wouldn't take her back. Her career was over. If feelings were this violent in 1945 about a mere entertainer, one can imagine the intensity of popular outrage when only six years later blaring London headlines announced that Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, two pampered children of Britain's upper class, were Soviet agents and had defected to Moscow.

So *An Englishman Abroad*, produced by the BBC, tells us little about Britain of the 50's but a great deal about Britain today, where treason seems to have been reduced to the level of a minor misdemeanor, entirely forgivable as an upper-class peccadillo—at least if committed by a gentleman with verve and the right sort of tailor. There is even something saucy and fetching about it, something rather stylish and U, as Nancy Mitford might say. An Englishman who betrayed his country used to be "the vilest creature known to man." But no more, apparently. No more.

JOHN LE CARRÉ (real name David Cornwell) has not concerned himself with treason in particular. He has made a career of writing spy thrillers denigrating Western intelligence services. When his *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* appeared in 1963 (with a rapturous blurb from Graham Greene), the top of the line in spy fiction was Ian Fleming, whose James Bond series was the purest fluff. Le Carré provided a sharp contrast. In Fleming, intelligence "agents" wear evening clothes, drink champagne, gamble at elegant casinos, drive expensive cars. In le Carré, shabby men in seedy offices do demeaning work for squalid ends. Le Carré's prose was, and has remained, lumpy, his dialogue leaden, his plots implausible, and his characters impossible, but a man who takes a gloomy view of the world recommends himself as a serious thinker, and le Carré was widely felt to have brought a kind of higher realism to espionage fiction. Long before the U.S. Congress began to impose legal limits on the operations of the Central Intelligence Agency, le Carré familiarized the reading public with the notion that Western intelligence services—the American even more than the British—were engaged in enterprises of a squalor and sordidness at least equal to those of the Soviet Union. (An element of perversity appears when we consider that le Carré has stated in conversation that he is a "frustrated British imperialist," which seems to imply that envy and a twisted despair play roles here, too.)

In *The Little Drummer Girl* le Carré pulls out all the stops. Whereas his earlier espionage thrillers had concerned the British

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intelligence services, a community of which he was an alumnus, *The Little Drummer Girl* deals with the Israeli and Palestinian Arab services, organizations he could have known about only through reading and hearsay and which he consequently described exactly as they existed in his imagination. This turned out to be at least a partial mistake. Deprived of le Carré's seeming authority when writing about British intelligence, *The Little Drummer Girl* had to stand on its own two feet as a work of literature, and the British press —at least the more or less conservative organs of the British press— gave it a long overdue slamming. While in America *Time* magazine saw fit to devote a major story to le Carré, in Britain the *Times Literary Supplement* called the book kitsch, the London *Times* compared it with the work of pop adventure writer Mary Stewart, and the *Daily Telegraph* described it brutally as "a failure," adding that le Carré "takes himself . . . much too seriously."

WALTER LAQUEUR has contributed to these pages an analysis of le Carré's work, including *The Little Drummer Girl*, on which I could hardly improve ("Le Carré's Fantasies," June 1983). The film made of the book, directed by George Roy Hill (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Slaughterhouse Five*), is, alas, all too faithful to the original.

The central character, on whom everything turns, is one of the most absurd in recent memory: "Charlie" (Diane Keaton), a London actress and PLO groupie. One would think that an actress with the approximate politics of Vanessa Redgrave would make a rather poor prospect for recruitment by Israel's Mossad, but those Zionist devils go after her nonetheless. Their stratagem is bewitching. A secret PLO operative gives a talk to a group of sympathizers in Nottingham, England. Charlie, who seems to make a habit of this sort of thing, feels her heart bleed, her knees turn to water; but the Palestinian, wearing a ski mask and a bright red blazer, slips off into the night. Several cranks of the plot later, Charlie, now in Athens, spies a man of Middle Eastern appearance wearing a bright red blazer. Knowing that any man in a red blazer must be "her" Palestinian, she makes rather bold advances, tugging him, as it were, toward the nearest bed.

But our Palestinian is a straight arrow and, after a bit of the Parthenon by moonlight, takes her to meet his comrades, led by Kurtz (Klaus Kinski). And darned if the whole pack of them don't turn out to be Israelis. Kurtz is an Israeli. Joseph, the man in the red blazer, is an Israeli. Even the "Palestinian" in Nottingham was an Israeli. But they have doped out our heroine by means of some rough-and-ready psychology: poor, lonely, sexually promiscuous Charlie, what she really wants is a "family." They offer her this family and, *bam*, Charlie throws in her lot with the Jewish people.

The Mossad operations group trusts this new recruit so completely that, as her first mission, she is sent to penetrate the Palestinian terror network and lead the Israelis to the master terrorist of them all, Khalil (French actor Sami Frey). Charlie accomplishes this in about forty-five shakes of a lamb's tail (tedious plot and counter-plot), the only problem being that she now falls in love with Khalil and sleeps with him, too. Khalil, Joseph, Joseph, Khalil. What's a poor girl looking for a family to do? First she falls in love with Joseph because she thinks he's a Palestinian. Then he turns into an Israeli, but it's okay because he's got a family. Then she falls in love with Khalil because the Palestinians have a family, too, and also he's cute. But it's all so senseless! And Charlie feels it is true tragedy when the Israelis blow Khalil away.

But she is not alone! Romance is not dead! Joseph defects! Back in England, rehearsing a play, a broken woman, Charlie casts her eye to the back of the empty theater, and there is Joseph. "I don't know the difference between right and wrong any more," he says portentously, to which Miss Keaton replies, with the magnificent silliness of an actress far, far beyond her depth, "I'm dead, Jose. You killed me, remember?" After which deep closing line, the two of them walk off into the gloaming.

Compared with the book, the film seems fairly muted on the issue of where justice lies as between Israel and the PLO. Many a moviegoer, not dwelling overlong on the meaning of Joseph's not knowing the difference between right and wrong any more, may not take in the fact that he has deserted both the Mossad and his country, something that is made quite explicit in the book. Le Carré's own official comment on *The Little Drummer Girl* is that it is saying, "A pox on both your houses." This, however, is nonsense, and in the same logical category as crying, "A pox on all nuclear weapons!" while calling on only the West to disarm (confident, naturally, that the Soviet Union will follow suit).

Moreover, to confine myself to the movie, Klaus Kinski—although an actor of some power—has never played a sympathetic role in his life, nor does he here as Kurtz. Sami Frey (Brigitte Bardot's ex-fiancé) is a matinée idol, and charming. The Israelis conform fairly closely to the Nazi model (the name "Kurtz" hardly spoiling that impression) and many of the Palestinians, among them Khalil, seem quite idealistic. Both sides are violent, but we *see* the Israelis' victims. There is no doubt about it, Warner Brothers has made America's first forthrightly anti-Israel movie. It is dropping like a stone all over the country.

THIS leaves me with the problem of America's movie critics, who, with the highly honorable exceptions of the New York *Times* and *Time*, are in the odd position of having fallen into raptures over a film that is both bad and a failure. It has been widely reported that American journalists are substantially to the Left of the American people; I submit that American film critics are, in their ecstatic way, far to the Left of other U.S. journalists. I have before me a full-page advertisement for *The Little Drummer Girl*, consisting largely of eulogistic quotes from eleven major reviewers. It is perhaps no surprise that *Newsweek*'s reviewer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should have found the film "the most riveting movie of the year," or that the reviewer for the *Village Voice* should have found it "tense and provocative." But the critic for Rupert Murdoch's New York *Post*, a paper hardly guilty of indulgence toward the Left, or of being anti-Israel, also thought it was "gripping and powerful, riveting entertainment," while the critic of the *Daily News* (which endorsed Ronald Reagan for President) felt it was "thrilling, involving, brilliantly done. . . . I was riveted to the screen from beginning to end."

But the most bizarre review of all appeared in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, a newspaper whose remarkably fine editorial pages are dedicated unswervingly to the advocacy of traditional, patriotic pro-Western positions. Israel probably has no more influential friend in the U.S. press than the *Wall Street Journal*. Yet the newspaper seems to resist tenaciously the notion that art in our age has become heavily politicized, feeling, I suppose, that it is "only culture" or perhaps "only entertainment." In any event, the paper's movie reviewer, Julie Salamon, wrote one of the most laudatory notices of *The Little Drummer Girl* in the entire country. At the end of a piece which affirms that John le Carré's novel stirred up controversy because it treated Palestinians and Israelis "more or less with an even hand" (the book's anti-Israel bias is naked), and which describes Klaus Kinski as playing Kurtz with a "frighteningly gentle cruelty," Miss Salamon writes:

> We see brutality, kindness, and fanaticism in both camps and are left with the message that this war is senseless and hopeless. This is certainly no great revelation, but it is enough to sustain a spy story where everything else works well. In *The Little Drummer Girl*, everything else works very well indeed.

The movie, as I have said, shows us substantially more fanaticism and brutality on the Israeli side, while kindness seems to be a Palestinian monopoly, with the exception of the Israeli, Joseph, who in the end defects. But, more important, the war between Palestinian and Israeli intelligence services is in actual fact not "senseless," any more than the struggle between the U.S. and the USSR is "senseless," and anyone who thinks it is should have an enforced course of reading in Clausewitz. Perhaps Miss Salamon has lost exactly what John le Carré has lost, a sense of the moral worth of our civilization —and that of Israel, so much a part of ours. But if that is true of a reviewer, what are we to make of American editors who publish such reviews but who have not for a moment forgotten the moral worth of our civilization?

A residual hangover from the days when we dominated a new continent unchallenged, plus a certain strain of philistinism, may make it hard for many Americans to recognize that contemporary culture is utterly permeated with ideology. Yves Montand, a French entertainer whose spectacular break with the Left has prompted wild if good-hearted speculation that he might become a new Ronald Reagan, once told me that he had never read a word of Karl Marx, but had been converted to Marxism by seeing Sergei Eisenstein's Soviet film classic, *The Battleship Potemkin*. Our opponents consider culture a battleground like any other. Yves Montand knows this. Shouldn't we?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Government & the Poor

LOSING GROUND: AMERICAN SOCIAL POLICY, 1950-1980. By CHARLES MURRAY. *Basic Books. 323 pp. $23.95.*

Reviewed by BRIGITTE BERGER

CHARLES MURRAY'S closely argued book is a bold and timely indictment of the past twenty years of American social policy. On trial stands the whole array of federally defined, designed, delivered, controlled, and financed efforts known collectively as the War on Poverty. In demonstrating how and why the most massive governmental intervention in American history failed to erase the "scandalous blemish" of poverty from the midst of the world's most affluent society, and how, in the final analysis, its main achievement may have been the institutionalization and expansion of what it had set out to destroy, Murray's book also constitutes a brilliant critique of the liberal vision of the welfare state. It has already attracted much attention and controversy; if it succeeds in arousing the nation to rethink the direction and purpose of our social policy, it will have made a lasting contribution.

Central to Murray's discussion is the fundamental shift that began to take place in the early 1960's in the "long-standing national consensus about what it means to be poor, who the poor are, and what they are owed by the rest of society." No longer content with offering "decent provision" to those whose misfortune was not of their own making, a new national consensus, or perhaps more precisely a consensus among the nation's intellectual elite, saw it as government's role to assume responsibility for "helping Americans to help themselves."

Once the new consensus was formed, it developed its own dynamic with awesome velocity. In no time, poverty itself began to be blamed on "the system." Writers like Michael Harrington set out to make a forceful case for the existence of "structural poverty"; poverty, it was said, is embedded within the very nature of capitalism. This meant that the traditional liberal recipe for fighting poverty—economic growth—no longer applied; sweeping changes were needed in the way income was distributed.

Calls for such changes found a wide hearing, especially in the wake of the riots of the late 60's. A medley of groups—the increasingly powerful band of policy experts with their can-do optimism; regiments of a new breed of lawyers purportedly serving the public interest; traditional do-gooders; the media—joined in making their own unique contributions to the newly received wisdom that poverty was not the fault of the individual but of the system, and that only a guaranteed "equality of outcome" would eliminate it. Translation into action quickly followed: a "legislative blitzkrieg" of anti-poverty bills, food stamps, Medicare, Medicaid, public-housing programs, manpower training, ever-expanding entitlement programs, and so on.

Twenty years have gone by since the clarion call to wage war on poverty, and stocktaking is in order. In one respect Murray's appraisal holds no great surprises, for in recent years there already has formed a broad though somewhat vague realization that this much-heralded domestic crusade has been a failure. The dire consequences have become too tangible and obvious to be ignored. But no one, I think, has chronicled in greater detail and more persuasively the dimensions of the failure, or has documented as carefully the linkage between particular interventionist measures and their direct, if unintended, contrary results.

Particularly disturbing is Murray's devastating analysis of what has happened precisely to those on whose behalf the whole battle was waged in the first place. "The number of people living in poverty," Murray writes, "stopped declining just as the public-assistance program budgets and the rate of increase in those budgets were highest." Not only is poverty still with us, but things have gotten worse. The data boggle the mind.

Some examples: For a long time the proportion of blacks participating in the labor market had been smaller than that of whites, but before 1965 the gap was slowly decreasing; since the War on Poverty began, the gap has widened disproportionately. In education, in spite of enormous progress made in high-school and college enrollments, the measured educational achievement of young poor black Americans has not only declined, but "as of 1980 the gap in educational achievement between black and white students leaving high school was so great that it threatened to defeat any other attempts to narrow the economic differences separating blacks from whites." Black violent crime soared in the late 1960's and 1970's, and the danger that a black would be a *victim* of violent crime was much larger in 1972 than it was in 1965. The black family is in shambles; the percentage of infants born to black single women went from 17 in 1950 to 55 in 1980, with teenage mothers contributing disproportionately to the increase.

WHAT happened? Murray argues that all the dire results that can be witnessed today can be traced to the changes wrought by the new social policy of the 60's in the attitudes and behavior of America's poor. In brief, the policies mandated by the new idea of structurally-caused poverty discouraged self-reliance and rewarded dependence. "Status distinctions among the poor," Murray writes, had traditionally "begun with the assumption that people are responsible for their actions, and, specifically, responsible for taking care of them-

BRIGITTE BERGER *teaches sociology at Wellesley and is the author (with Peter Berger) of* The War Against the Family: Capturing the Middle Ground.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Studies on Judaism and Christianity FROM TRANSACTION BOOKS

GLOBAL ECONOMICS AND RELIGION

James Finn, editor

Focusing on the significance of religion in a complex social and political environment, specifically on changes in the relationship between religion and economics, these essays examine the close interdependence of religion and economics in India, Iran, Mexico, Japan, and Nigeria: countries of world significance possessing different religions. In wide-ranging and incisive essays, the contributors describe the underlying core values which permeate and support the economic institutions and activities of each of these five societies and perceive how they relate to the major religions of that society.

James Finn is associate director for research at Freedom House and was formerly vice president of the Council on Religion and International Affairs.

ISBN: 0-87855-477-7 (cloth) **$26.95**

MAINSTREAM AND MARGINS

JEWS, BLACKS, AND OTHER AMERICANS

Peter I. Rose

This volume of commentaries on racial and ethnic relations is a sociological assessment of a changing society and a personal statement about many of the most pressing racial issues since the 1954 Brown-Supreme Court decision. From the perspective of humanistic sociology, Peter Rose shows that sociology need not be a cold, artless science and argues that sociological enterprise should treat future as well as past and present issues.

Contents: "The Ghetto and Beyond," "Tensions and Trends," "Country Cousins," "City Lights," "Race and Education in New York," "The Black Experience," "Social Physics," "Blacks and Jews," "On the Subject of Race," "Problems in Conveying the Meaning of Ethnicity," and "It's Almost 1984."

Peter I. Rose is Sophia Smith Professor and director of the American Studies Diploma at Smith College.

ISBN: 0-87855-473-4 (cloth) **$24.95**

THE LETTERS AND PAPERS OF CHAIM WEIZMANN

SERIES B: PAPERS

Barnet Litvinoff, editor

These two volumes of the papers of Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, are essential for a complete understanding of Weizmann's thinking as a Jew, as a scientist, and as a political leader. They present statements deeply thought out, often polished before delivery, and intended for insertion into an historical record. This selection, which spans his life from 1898-1952, includes speeches (many of them to closed audiences and not previously published), private interviews, evidence before investigating committees, minutes of meetings, memoranda, and newspaper articles.

Volume I: 1898-1931
ISBN: 0-87855-279-0 (cloth) **$39.95**
Volume II: 1931-1952
ISBN: 0-87855-297-8 (cloth) **$39.95**

ANTI-SEMITISM IN AMERICA

Harold E. Quinley and Charles Y. Glock
New Foreword by Theodore Freedman

Periodic outbreaks of anti-Jewish hostility testify to the continuing presence of anti-Semitism in America. Based on the most extensive research ever conducted on the subject, *Anti-Semitism in America*, now in a new paperback edition, provides us with the often surprising facts about the enduring form of bigotry and sheds new light on the nature of prejudice in general.

Harold E. Quinley is associate professor of political science in the graduate faculty at The New School for Social Research,

Charles Y. Glock is professor of sociology emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley.

Theodore Freedman is director of the Intergroup Relations Division of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

ISBN: 0-87855-940-X (paper) **$12.95**

POLITICAL THEORY AS PUBLIC CONFESSION

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT OF ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

Peter Dennis Bathory

Bathory examines the latent political teaching in the writings of Augustine, whose thought and action constituted an attempt to build the individual and collective foundations necessary to the reestablishment of a more public order.

Peter Dennis Bathory is assistant professor of political science, Rutgers University.

ISBN: 0-87855-405-X (cloth) **$24.95**

JEWS IN SOVIET CULTURE

Jack Miller, editor

Jews in Soviet Culture is the first authoritative book on Jewish contributions to Soviet culture, covering the fields of literature, painting, sculpture, music, philosophy, and Oriental studies. Unlike other works on Jews in the Soviet Union that deal mainly with political history—especially with discrimination and repression—this book focusses on the creative role of Jews in various aspects of Soviet culture and civilization.

Jack Miller is senior lecturer at the Institute of Soviet and East European Studies, University of Glasgow. He was formerly editor of the journal *Soviet Studies*.

ISBN: 0-87855-495-5 (cloth) **$24.95**

Order from your bookstore or prepaid from:

Transaction Books
Department JC 3
Rutgers—The State University
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

selves and their families as best as they could." Once, however, it was assumed that the "system" was to be blamed when a person was out of work, it was an easy step to "the belief that the system is even to blame when a person neglects spouse and family. . . ." In this manner, status was stripped from people who were holding menial jobs and supporting their families, and a strong incentive was provided for abandoning both job and family.

"When large numbers of people begin to behave differently from ways they behaved before," Murray writes, "my first assumption is that they do so for good reason." In other words, the poor, in becoming more rather than less dependent on government, were behaving quite rationally. As a consequence of the new mode of government intervention, it simply became "easier to get along without a job. It was easier for a man to have a baby without being responsible for it, for a woman to have a baby without a husband. It was easier to get away with crime." And so on. From which it follows that, if our intention is to offer the poor a way *out* of poverty, we must abandon the pattern of the immediate past, which positively encouraged people to fail, and devise policies that will help to restore the traditional emphases on individual effort, self-reliance, and conventional morality.

In the final part of his book Murray presents his own ideas for accomplishing this objective. His three major proposals relate to education, civil rights, and social welfare. In education he strongly advocates a turn to a universal voucher system. In the area of civil rights he affirms the Civil Rights Act of 1964 but would repeal every bit of subsequent legislation and overturn the court decisions that require differential treatment according to race. In the area of public welfare his general recipe is for getting government out of it. Aside from support for the "truly needy," unemployment insurance, and the establishment of a safety net on the local (but not the federal) level, he is inclined to scrap the entire welfare and income-support structure for persons of working age. Aid to Families With Dependent Children, Medicare, food stamps, and the rest, all would have to go.

WHAT can be said about these proposals? Murray insists that morality is on his side here, and he may well be right. After all, if these social programs are indeed harmful, who could morally justify their continuation? My problems with Murray are on a different level, having to do with his understanding of the nature of individual and social life.

Both in his analysis of what went wrong and in his proposals for a cure, Murray opts for a "rational decision-making" model of human behavior. Disregarding cultural, social, and psychological factors, he insists that the behavior of the poor can be understood on rational economic grounds alone. I doubt, however, whether such a model will go far in explaining the actions of *any* individual or group. It certainly does not explain those of my own children and students, middle-class all and supposedly endowed with ample portions of rationality. I find it no less difficult to accept that, for instance, a teenage girl gets herself pregnant primarily out of some rational economic calculus of costs and benefits.

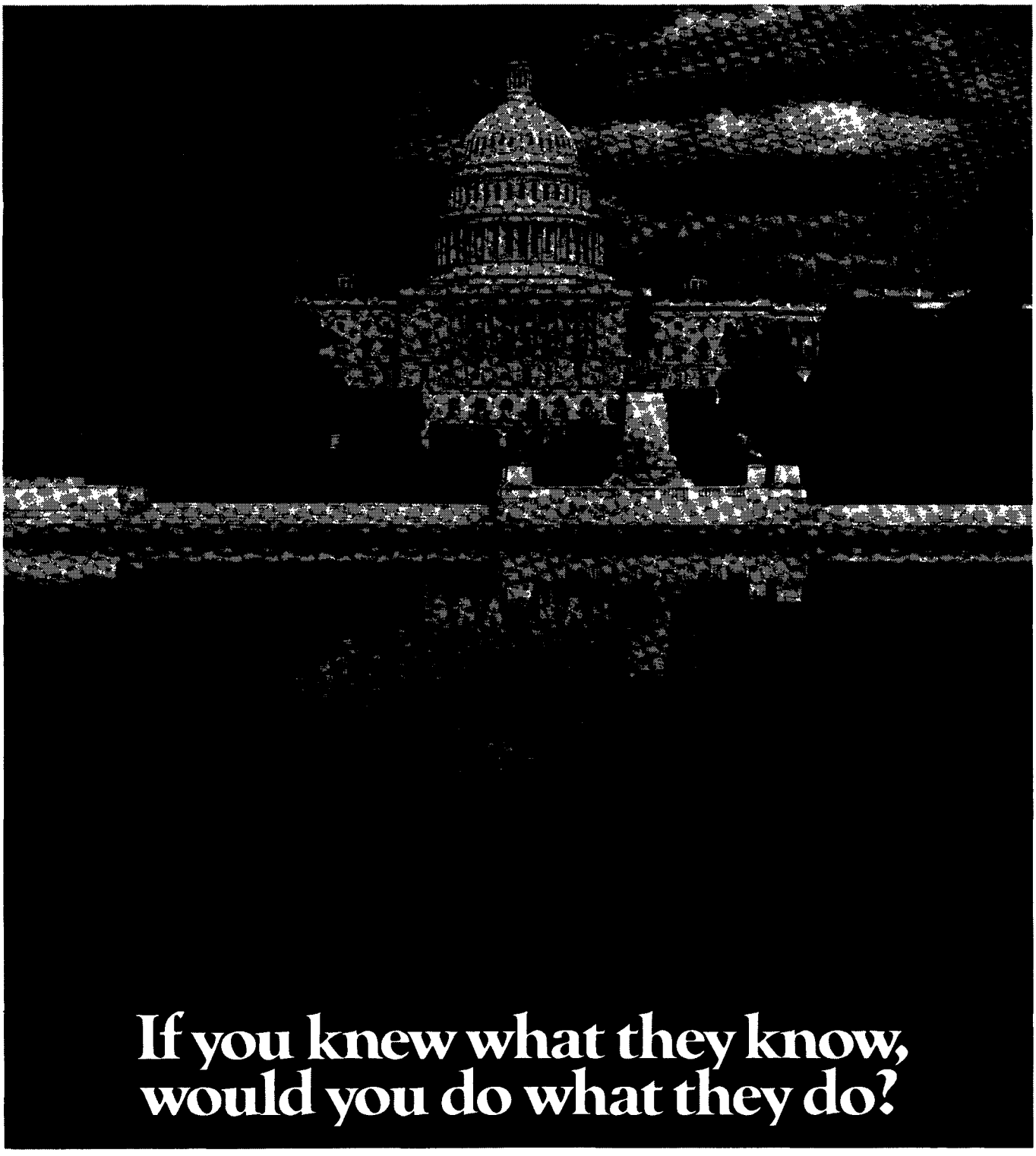
Murray contends that there are real limits to the ability of any government to help the poor, and this is demonstrably true. But he errs in my opinion—again, both in his analysis and in his policy proposals—by focusing narrowly on just two players, the individual and the government. His political philosophy (which, as far as I can make out, is conservative with strong libertarian overtones) leads him to exclude from the drama of social life all those institutions that throughout history have mediated between the individual and government: the neighborhood, the church, voluntary groupings, and the like. And since, in Murray's scheme, government is to be removed, this leaves the individual isolated and alone. Are we then to rid ourselves of the ill-conceived Great Society programs, with their extreme notions of "individual rights" which turned out to be so harmful to the fabric of social life, only to replace them with an equally atomistic conception in which individuals will supposedly do better simply because they will be free to maximize their interests in the marketplace?

To my mind, the great failure of the War on Poverty derived precisely from its disregard of the natural groupings, the "small platoons," in Edmund Burke's felicitous phrase, that are so important to individuals. It is out of a concern for the preservation and enhancement of those groupings that I am considerably less willing than Charles Murray to scrap all social programs. A good case can be made, I think, for the continuation of some, like Head Start. Although the *educational* achievement of Head Start is not as evident as some would like, it has nonetheless been of considerable value to families and neighborhoods suffering from the social devastation so well described by Murray. It has provided, for many, a strong sense of community and of purpose.

Similarly, anyone familiar with the inner workings of the black community cannot fail to be impressed by the enormous vitality of the many self-help arrangements demonstrating enterprise, common sense, and the enduring hold of traditional values. To be sure, some of these activities may have become overly dependent on official America, but they need hardly remain so forever. It has been shown, for example, that the energies of street gangs can be redirected to socially useful ends; public funds can provide incentives for this. Self-help endeavors have never been given a chance, certainly not by the 60's poverty crusaders. I would argue that we cannot afford to bypass them, since they express better than anything else the desires of actual people living in actual communities.

In the coming years we will need more than ever a coherent social policy. The Democratic party continues to dream of a return to the programs of the 60's, despite the fact that the ideas which inspired those programs have been thoroughly discredited. As for the Republicans, at the moment they seem more preoccupied with budget-cutting than with devising policies that might capture the imagination and the support of the American

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



If you knew what they know, would you do what they do?

Here's your chance to find out what our policy makers know about this year's major foreign policy issues...and to tell them what you would do if the decisions were in your hands.

Great Decisions '84 is a lively briefing that lets you be a political insider. Published by the Foreign Policy Association, a nonpartisan educational organization, this booklet gives you unique insight into this year's most important issues. You'll learn about U.S.-Soviet relations, the nuclear arms race, the world debt crisis, and five other vital questions confronting our nation.

GREAT DECISIONS '84

Introduction

1 U.S.S.R. UNDER ANDROPOV
Hard Choices for Moscow & Washington

2 CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO & THE U.S.
Discord Among Neighbors

3 U.S. SECURITY & WORLD PEACE
Allies, Arms & Diplomacy

4 SOUTH AFRICA
Can U.S. Policies Influence Change?

5 INTERNATIONAL DEBT CRISIS
Borrowers, Banks & the IMF

6 SAUDI ARABIA & JORDAN
Kingdoms at the Crossroads?

7 CHINA & THE U.S.
Five Years After Normalization

8 INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFIC
Can It Be Stopped?

◊ Opinion Ballots

Foreign Policy Association

Vote by using the special opinion ballots found in each booklet, and the FPA will make sure our leaders know where you stand. To order your copy of *Great Decisions '84* now, send your check for $6.70 (includes postage and handling) payable to Foreign Policy Association, Dept. A, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016 or call 212-481-8453 for additional information.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people. The field is thus open. In the emerging debate, Charles Murray's *Losing Ground* will almost certainly become an indispensable point of reference; my own hope is that his analysis of what went wrong will win the widespread credence it deserves, even if his policy proposals need not be taken as the final word on what it is humanly possible to do for the poor.

Odd Man Out?

ILYA EHRENBURG: WRITING, POLITICS, AND THE ART OF SURVIVAL. By ANATOL GOLDBERG. Introduction, postscript, and additional material by ERIK DE MAUNY. *Viking. 312 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by LIONEL KOCHAN

THE career of the writer Ilya Ehrenburg is an inextricable part of the odyssey and travails of Russian Jewry in the 20th century, under both czars and Soviets. Born in 1891 into a comfortable, assimilated family in Kiev, Ehrenburg grew up in Moscow where he became friendly with Nikolai Bukharin, the future Bolshevik leader and ideologue who introduced him to underground political activity. The youthful Ehrenburg was arrested and imprisoned, but then allowed to leave Russia to study in the West. Thus began his lifelong affair with Paris, where, during and after World War I, he enjoyed the companionship of such artists and writers as Picasso, Soutine, Cocteau, Apollinaire, and Modigliani.

Ehrenburg returned home in 1917, and thenceforth moved continuously between Russia and the West. In the 20's and 30's, he was Paris correspondent for several Soviet journals, reporting among other things on the Saar plebiscite of 1935, the Spanish Civil War, and the fall of Paris to the Nazis. During World War II, he became one of the leading members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, and won international stature as an anti-Nazi propagandist *par excellence*.

It was perhaps this role that helped to insure his survival during Stalin's "anti-cosmopolitan" campaign of the late 40's and early 50's. In any event, Ehrenburg was one of the very few leading Soviet-Jewish intellectuals to live into the Khrushchev era. (His role in the formation of the World Peace Council may also have helped.) Ehrenburg then became the prophet who wrote *The Thaw,* and the brilliant autobiographer of *People, Years, Life*. He died in 1967.

AS EVEN so brief a summary of his life suggests, Ehrenburg's role in Soviet political and intellectual affairs is susceptible of conflicting interpretations. Was he simply an apologist for Stalinism, or was he a covert fighter for the liberalization of Soviet society? As a Jew, was he primarily an assimilationist, or did he identify strongly with his people? The answer, of course, is that he was both.

In the old Russian tradition of the writer at odds with the censor (whether czarist or Soviet), Ehrenburg sometimes wrote in a sort of "Aesopian language," telegraphing his meaning to those who understood the code. For example, only a few months after the establishment of Israel in 1948, he contributed an article to *Pravda* that already heralded the prospective switch in Soviet policy away from its earlier pro-Zionist stance. In this piece he denounced the Zionists as "mystics" and warned Soviet Jews not to develop any special sympathy for Israel or indeed to succumb to notions of solidarity with Jews elsewhere. True, Ehrenburg wrote, the Soviet Union welcomed Jewish aspirations to statehood, but the "workers" in Israel "must fight not only against the [Arab] invaders but also against the bourgeoisie. . . ."

Three weeks later when Golda Myerson (Meir), the first ambassador of Israel to the Soviet Union, celebrated the Jewish New Year at Moscow's central synagogue amid the tumultuous enthusiasm of fellow-worshippers, it was clear why Ehrenburg had written as he did. Such demonstrations could not be tolerated. The Soviet onslaught on Zionism and Israel had not yet developed anti-Semitic overtones, but the message Ehrenburg was delivering was certainly an ominous one. Or was it only a timely warning?

Even more ambiguous, not to say sinister, was Ehrenburg's position with regard to the dissolution of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the arrest of its leading members, all of whom were later executed (1949-52). They included friends and colleagues of Ehrenburg—the writers Dovid Bergelson, Itzik Fefer, and Peretz Markish, and the actor/director Shlomo Mikhoels. When the question of their fate was raised at a London press conference in 1950, Ehrenburg merely replied: "If anything unpleasant had happened to them, I would have known about it." His biographer, Anatol Goldberg, calls this a "lie . . . deliberately decked out to sound like the truth."

Yet Ehrenburg avoided the worst servilities of the Stalinist period, and in a curious way he did preserve his integrity. He knew and recognized what was happening, and when the time was ripe—that is, when it was safe, after Stalin's death—he revealed something of what he had seen. He then became a spokesman for some degree of liberalization of Soviet society and greater freedom for creative writers. In 1966, a year before his death, Ehrenburg was one of the 62 members of the Soviet Writers' Union who sent a letter of protest to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet over the condemnation of two of the earliest dissidents, Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel.

As a Jew, Ehrenburg was a constant target of party hacks like the novelist Mikhail Sholokhov, to whom he (and also Pasternak) were not "Russian writers." Yet unlike Pasternak, Ehrenburg never forswore his Jewish origins, and just before his death in 1967 he identified himself fully with Israel's cause in the Six-Day War.

Nadezhda Mandelstam perhaps sums it up best in her memoirs when she calls Ehrenburg "always the odd man out among the Soviet writers. . . . He was as helpless as

---

LIONEL KOCHAN *is Bearstead Reader in Jewish History at the University of Warwick in England. His books include* The Making of Modern Russia *and* The Jew and His History.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

everybody else, but at least he tried to do something for others." At his funeral, she adds,

> there was a great crowd and the faces were decent and human ones. It was an anti-fascist crowd and the police spies who had been sent to the funeral stood out very conspicuously. It was clear, in other words, that Ehrenburg had done his work well, difficult and thankless though it was.

EHRENBURG was an extraordinarily prolific and versatile writer. There are to his credit thirty-odd volumes of novels, poems, plays, reportage, chronicles, memoirs, literary criticism, polemics, and so forth. The great bulk is ephemeral, but two of the early novels stand out as lasting contributions to Russian literature. The first is *The Extraordinary Adventures of Julio Jurenito,* first published in Berlin in 1922 and shortly afterward in a Soviet edition with an introduction by Bukharin, then editor of *Pravda* and a member of the Politburo. The second is *Lazik Roitschwantz* (1927), also published in Berlin.

Julio Jurenito is Ehrenburg's response to war, revolution, and the general state of the world. A satire that at times recalls Swift, Voltaire, and Aldous Huxley, it is iconoclastic, spirited, witty, anarchic, tasteless. The plot—of which Goldberg gives an ample summary—concerns a conspiracy to destroy the world by exacerbating its already abundant disorders and abuses. The aim of the conspirators is to achieve a state of perfect freedom, beyond both capitalism and socialism; indeed, a curious feature of the novel is the lightly disguised figure of Lenin, shown as "the captain on the bridge" who desires to make men free—but by force.

Lazik Roitschwantz is satire in a different genre and tradition, that of Yiddish literature. Ehrenburg takes the familiar figure of the *Luftmensch* and makes of it a tragicomic vehicle for exposing and illuminating corruption and pretense. Lazik, a tailor, undergoes a series of picaresque misadventures; he is alternately exploiter and exploited, an innocent and a charlatan. At one point he falls victim to the chicanery of Soviet bureaucracy; at another he plays the part of a Marxist literary critic whose impressive jargon takes in his fellow critics; at still another he poses as a modern painter of unique originality who through his guile undermines at once the cultural self-importance of rich Frankfurt Jews and the clichés of modern art. In a final irony, Lazik dies in Palestine, his ancestral homeland. An extraordinary book, extraordinary both for the evenhandedness of its wit and for its flavor of Jewish nationalism, *Lazik* has understandably never been published in the Soviet Union.

In the end, not much more remains of Ehrenburg's voluminous writings than these two works of satire. The rest—the literary "peace" campaigns, the endless record of adjustments and accommodations to the shifting Soviet line—all belong to the past. But it is a past well worth recalling, and Goldberg has done it justice.

Like Ehrenburg, his biographer was also born in Russia of a middle-class Jewish family. He migrated to the West in the mid-1930's and became a respected commentator on Russian affairs for the BBC. This familiarity with the two worlds, combined with a certain remoteness from both, gave Goldberg, who unfortunately died before completing this book, the necessary feel for the nuances of a slippery, dark, and still enigmatic subject.

Science & Ideology

NOT IN OUR GENES. By RICHARD C. LEWONTIN, STEVEN ROSE, and LEON J. KAMIN. *Pantheon. 368 pp. $21.95.*

Reviewed by BERNARD D. DAVIS

FOR over a decade a group of scientists on the radical Left, Science for the People (SFP), has

BERNARD D. DAVIS, *a new contributor, is emeritus professor of bacterial physiology at the Harvard Medical School.*

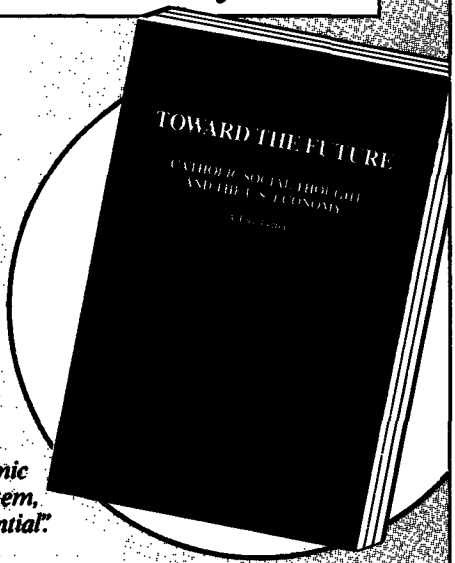
TOWARD THE FUTURE:
Catholic Social Thought
And The U.S. Economy

A Report by the
Lay Commission on
Catholic Social Teaching
and the U.S. Economy
William E. Simon, *Chairman*
Michael Novak, *Vice-Chairman*

"A first word in what is expected to be a long and heated discussion of the relationship of Roman Catholic teachings to the economy..."
NEW YORK TIMES

"...compassionate and realistic..."
SEATTLE TIMES

"For any complete religious and economic understanding of the U.S economic system, the Lay Commission's statement is essential."
James V. Schall, S.J.
Georgetown University



To order send to:
Lay Commission, P.O. Box 364
North Tarrytown, NY 10591

Single copies: $2.95
10-99 copies: $2.50 each
100 or more: $2.00 each
Add $1.00 for shipping

Please enclose payment with order.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pursued a campaign against studies of human behavioral genetics. *Not in Our Genes* is a major contribution to that campaign, and the authors make no secret of their political purpose:

> We share a commitment to the prospect of the creation of a more socially just—a socialist—society. And we recognize that a critical science is an integral part of the struggle to create that society, just as we also believe that the social function of much of today's science is to hinder the creation of that society by acting to preserve the interests of the dominant class, gender, and race.

Given this ideological commitment, it is not surprising that the authors condemn human behavioral genetics, intelligence testing, and sociobiology as worthless and even pernicious. Moreover, they attack the motivation as well as the conclusions of scientists engaged in these fields, projecting upon them an aim as frankly political as their own, but opposite in intention. All work in these areas is seen as serving a prejudiced society: "It is precisely to meet the need for self-justification and to prevent social disorder that the ideology of biological determinism has been developed." Even more, those whom they label "biological determinists" are accused of continuing the earlier misuses of genetic theories to rationalize racial discrimination.

In their passion to discredit genetic studies, the authors even go so far as to reject Seymour Kety's classic demonstration of the major role played by heredity in schizophrenia. Yet studies such as Kety's are in fact a necessary step toward the identification of abnormal genes; and while Lewontin *et al.* clearly fear that this knowledge will be used for reactionary eugenic measures, in actuality it provides the most promising approach, through the fantastic power of molecular genetics, to understanding the disease and to developing specific therapies.

Some of the views of the authors on behavioral genetics and on psychometric testing seem idiosyncratic or just plain silly: for example, in psychometric testing "human action is itself reduced to individual reified lumps objectified in the black box of the head." And in a gross distortion of history and of science the authors write:

> [IQ] test items that differentiated boys from girls . . . were removed, since the tests were not meant to make that distinction; differences between social classes, or between ethnic groups or races, however, have not been massaged away, precisely because it is these differences that the tests are *meant* to measure.

This statement is inexcusable. As anyone in the field knows, boys average slightly better on spatial items and girls slightly better on verbal items, and their overall averages are equalized by adjusting the proportions of various kinds of items, not by removing differentiating ones. The other groups mentioned cannot be equalized in this way because they do not have compensatory areas of high performance, even in non-verbal tests.

WHILE most of *Not in Our Genes* repeats earlier arguments made by Science for the People, it is important to note one novel position that seems to represent a major shift. After many years of denouncing so-called "biological determinists" and struggling to convince the world that genes have little to do with behavioral differences between individuals, Lewontin and his colleagues (and also Stephen Jay Gould in his recent writings) now state their conviction that intelligence is the product of interactions between genetic potentials and environmental inputs, and that both sources are substantial. This, as it happens, is the position that has long been held by serious students of the subject. Unfortunately, although the authors now have an opportunity to end a lot of sterile polemics, they deny that their opponents hold this interactionist view; the denigrating epithet "biological determinist" is repeated by them, in a depressingly familiar political tactic, on virtually every page. Moreover, the title of their book forces one to suspect that the authors' own conversion to interactionism is a matter less of conviction than of tactics. One's skepticism is reinforced by their comment on J.B.S. Haldane and H.J. Muller, two distinguished earlier geneticists and Marxists who "argued (along lines that we would not) that important aspects of human behavior were influenced by genes."

In addition to attacking what they call "biological determinism," the authors also spend a good bit of time tilting at "reductionism": the attempt to understand complex systems in terms of the properties of their components. They condemn contemporary pharmacological research as simplistic because it seeks drugs that hit a specific target; and they even object to testing the blood-alcohol level of possible drunken drivers because a variety of different moods can be associated with the same level. In place of this "reductionist" approach they expound their faith that dialectical materialism offers a more powerful analytic tool:

> We would counterpose the understanding of . . . revolutionary practitioners and theorists like Mao Tse-tung on the power of human consciousness in both interpreting and changing the world, a power based on an understanding of the essential dialectic unity of the biological and the social . . . as ontologically coterminous.

But if the insights of the dialectic are so valuable for biomedical science, one wonders why the Soviet Union has not developed a single useful antibiotic. It is sad indeed to see how these intelligent scientists, in their dedication to seeking a better society through Marxism, feel obligated as well to apply the murky principles of dialectical materialism to science.

WHY trouble to review such doctrinaire material? The reason is that some highly respected publications have greeted this book enthusiastically, as a serious scientific contribution. Yet as I hope to have made clear, however briefly, the fundamental aims of *Not in Our Genes* lead to a distorted picture, feed a growing anti-science sentiment, and undermine the very foundation of science: the commitment to objectivity. To be sure, scientists approach the ideal of objectivity only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imperfectly, and sometimes are guilty of unconscious bias; but if their practice remains honest, the resulting errors can eventually be corrected. By contrast, any deliberate introduction of ideological preconceptions, *à la* Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin, compromises the integrity of science, today no less than in the time of Galileo.

The New Mercantilism

STAYING ON TOP: THE BUSINESS CASE FOR A NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY. By KEVIN P. PHILLIPS. *Random House. 171 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by MELVILLE J. ULMER

KEVIN P. PHILLIPS's reputation as a political seer began with the publication, when he was still in his twenties, of *The Emerging Republican Majority*, a book containing a vision of the future that appears to have included subsequent election returns. The book was written just after a stint as assistant manager of Richard Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign, and was followed by a career as newspaper columnist and magazine editor. Now, in *Staying on Top*, Phillips looks to the future again.

The stage for further change ahead is set, as he sees it, by the rise of "neo-mercantilism" in international economic relations, which has already gravely wounded some of America's major industries and is threatening others. His prediction concerns what he believes to be the desirable and also the inevitable political reaction: a business-oriented form of American national planning, sharply distinguished from the "liberal" types of planning advocated by Robert Reich, Robert Lekachman, and the Democratic platform of the 1984 presidental campaign. *Staying on Top* is an extended call to action to bring that policy shift about. Its spirit is caught in the very first paragraph:

> This book is essentially about America's role in the world economy and the politics of blueprinting new policies to safeguard our primacy and prosperity—to keep Dayton, Ohio, safe for the figurative middle-aged machinist and his wife. And also to keep Santa Clara County, California, safe for the next generation of computers and the next generation of silicon chips.

The specific peril to which Phillips refers here lies in an anomaly —predatory trade practices that have grown common throughout the world *except*, he says, in the United States. Thus, more than a decade ago the Common Market countries of Western Europe adopted an aggressive strategy for supporting their exports and controlling their imports. Japan, first and foremost among nations, seized autarky as a way of life. All have subsidized the outputs of their less competitive industries, flooding America's domestic markets and those of former American customers. All have erected barriers—tariffs, quotas, or flat restrictions—against external competitors. Even Third World countries have been forced into the common mold, under deliberate duress from the International Monetary Fund to promote exports and reduce imports. Only America clings to a tradition, however qualified, of free trade.

Indeed, since it is patently impossible for all countries, simultaneously, to enjoy "favorable" balances of trade, one or more exceptions to the general rule are essential. What could be more convenient than that this role should be filled by the most opulent and least protected market of all, the United States? So, with considerable cogency, Phillips argues. As a result, from Youngstown to Detroit and from Baton Rouge to Los Angeles, he sees growing pockets of unemployment and contracting or failing business enterprises.

Phillips is confident that this situation will not last; business leaders, whom he quotes at length and throughout, will not tolerate it. They ask for, or demand, protection, and their chorus is growing. According to Phillips, the pressure will prove politically irresistible, especially when the endorsement of labor unions is added to it. Busi-

---

MELVILLE J. ULMER, *whose books include* Economics: Theory and Practice *and* The Welfare State: USA, *is emeritus professor of economics at the University of Maryland.*

"THE OTHERWISE URBANE Roger Rosenblatt writes in *Time* that 'religions oppose rational processes' and that religious thinking 'sets heretics on fire, promotes ignorance, inflames bigotry, encourages superstition, erases history, invades nations, and slaughters the opposition.' If that is true, we certainly have a full agenda for Reagan's second term."

For a free copy of the current issue of National Review write to Dept. C-13. 150 East 35th Street. New York, N.Y. 10016.

Richard Viguerie's new book

The Establishment vs. The People:

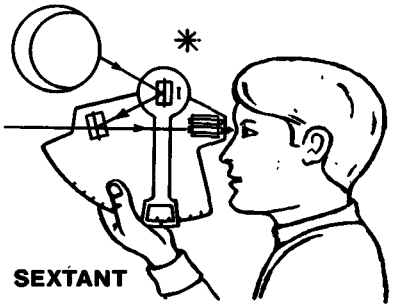
"indispensable for those who would understand the future of American politics" **(Lew Lehrman);** *"a useful way to start 1984 . . . an excellent analysis"* **(Cong. Newt Gingrich).**

$12.95. from the American Populist Institute, 7777 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22043. Also available at your local bookstore.

STIMULATE INQUIRING, YOUNG MINDS...

with a THINGS membership. Kits mailed each month have materials to use, and a booklet giving background on the science subject and easy to follow instructions for exciting demonstrations and experiments.

Designed for young people 10 to 16, parents often enjoy them too!



SEXTANT

IDEAS FOR SCIENCE FAIRS-AN INTERESTING HOBBY-A HELP IN DECIDING ON A CAREER-A GIFT THAT'S FOR THE WHOLE YEAR;

JOIN NOW!

MAIL WITH REMITTANCE TO:

THINGS of Science

RD 1, Box 130C
Newtown, PA 18940

GIFT CARD SENT IF REQUESTED
1 YEAR - $17.50 2 YEARS - $33.00
EACH ADDITIONAL MEMBER - $16.00
CANADA AND MEXICO ADD $6.50;
OTHER COUNTRIES ADD $9.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HUMAN SCIENCES PRESS, INC.

Linzer, Norman, Ph.D.
THE JEWISH FAMILY
Authority and Tradition in Modern Perspective
Foreword by: David Hartman, Ph.D.

This insightful book examines the relationship between the authority of Jewish tradition and the autonomy of the individual, and how these impact on the modern Jewish family.

"... an important scholarly contribution which will undoubtedly be helpful not only to those who have a professional concern for the Jewish family, but also those many people who are part of Jewish families and who struggle to make them work."
Bernard Reisman
Brandeis University

1984 217 pp.
0-89885-149-1 hard $29.95
0-89885-191-2 paper $16.95

Zeligs, Dorothy F., Ed.D.
MOSES
A Psychodynamic Study

This study of Moses, ranging from the time of his birth in Egypt to his death on a mountaintop in Moab, uses psychoanalytic concepts and techniques to reveal an in-depth image of this mysterious figure who dominates so much of the Pentateuchal literature. Moses emerges, not only as the phenomenal leader of the Hebrew people, but as a genuine human being, with whose strengths and weaknesses every reader can identify.

1985 384 pp. (approx.)
0-89885-236-6 Cloth $39.95

Weisman, Avery, M.D.
THE COPING CAPACITY
On the Nature of Being Mortal

Combining practical instruction with clinical examples, this useful book examines how to help patients cope not only with the approach of death, but also with those losses, mortal and moral, which they face each day.

1984 165 pp.
0-89885-206-4 $26.95

HUMAN SCIENCES PRESS, INC.
72 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011

Please send

ISBN (last 4 digits) author/title

Total
N.Y. Residents add sales tax
Grand Total

☐ Check enclosed (We pay postage & handling)
☐ Bill me (Plus postage & handling)
Charge: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Exp.
Account #
Exp date Signature
To: Name
Affiliation
Address
City State Zip

nessmen put their case most persuasively, and ingenuously, when they ask "simply" for a "leveling of the playing field" in the game of international trade. Since persuading our trading partners to change their ways has obviously proved hopeless, "leveling" will require prompt, cohesive, and aggressive American action. Hence, in Phillips's view, the need for a "national industrial strategy."

For that purpose, Phillips presents a fifteen-point program derived, he says, almost entirely from the suggestions of business leaders. In the plan, a new Department of Trade and Industry would coordinate a scheme for retaliating systematically against the inroads of trading rivals—through appropriate tariffs, quotas, and subsidies of our own—while promoting tax laws and labor legislation to encourage investment, productivity, and also worker protection against sudden layoffs. Also involved would be further federal support for technological research, worker retraining, and improved bars against the theft of American technical innovations by foreigners.

ONE major fault with *Staying on Top* is that it is long on ebullient rhetoric and short on recognition of complicating facts—particularly as they are adduced by those who Phillips knows full well would oppose his program with the last drop of available ink. For example, what Phillips views as a sign of American weakness—the current large deficit in American merchandise trade—Under Secretary of the Treasury Beryl Sprinkel sees as a natural outcome of American economic strength. Our advance in productivity and total output has substantially outstripped that of the rest of the world, Sprinkel has written. (George Gilder has estimated that the U.S. share of global GNP rose from 28 percent in 1980 to nearly one-third in 1984.) The resultant rise in U.S. incomes quite naturally increased our purchase of imports, while the weaker demand of our foreign customers retarded the growth of our exports. The consequence: a growing deficit.

Nor is that all. It is universally recognized that there are still other factors, having nothing to do with unfair trade, that contribute to the imbalance in U.S. international payments. The overvalued dollar, a condition prevailing so far through most of the 80's, renders all American goods more expensive for foreigners. Conversely, it makes *their* goods cheaper for us. In addition, it is well known that in the most painfully affected American industries—autos and steel—wages are not only far higher than among foreign competitors, but approximately twice as high as the average in the rest of the United States.

All of which proves only that Phillips does not tell the whole story. It may still be true, and probably is, that we are disadvantaged by the predatory market practices of trading partners. Yet even here some further evidence is in order. First, the picture of the United States as a passive patsy for the world's traders can be overdrawn. Trade expert William R. Cline estimates that "at least one-third of the U.S. market for manufactured goods" is protected by tariffs and other restrictions, including "voluntary" quotas. Second, as Marina v. N. Whitman, chief economist for General Motors, has observed, and as can all too poignantly be learned from experience, retaliation breeds retaliation, thus closing the channels of trade and reducing living standards for all. Mrs. Whitman has noted that as soon as the United States imposed retaliatory limits on subsidized steel imports, the Common Market countries moved "to impose retaliatory quotas and tariff increases on U.S. exports of sporting goods, plastics, and chemicals." Just one example among many.

What, then, is the appropriate posture for the United States in foreign trade? Henry Kissinger believes that as the leader of the free world, we have an obligation to try our best to restore the rule of law in international economic relations. He proposes that we promote an International Trade Organization, with all nations as participating members, to be empowered to act "against restrictions on trade and investment as well as predatory trade practices." Obvi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ously, some kind of sanctions would be in order. His proposal offers no assurance of full success, but it does at least offer the hope of substantially diminishing the level of economic warfare.

Prisoner

IN LOVE AND WAR. By JAMES AND SYBIL STOCKDALE. *Harper & Row. 472 pp. $18.95.*

Reviewed by HENRIK BERING-JENSEN

ON THE morning of Thursday, September 9, 1965, a squadron of 37 fighter-bombers took off from the USS *Oriskany* on station in the South China Sea. Its leader was the forty-one-year-old Commander James B. Stockdale. It was Stockdale's two-hundredth mission; his Vietnam stint was almost over, and a desk job was waiting at the Pentagon. The target on this particular day was one of North Vietnam's most stubborn constructions, the Ham Rong (Dragon's Jaw) Bridge. Visibility over land, however, was so poor that Stockdale ordered his squadron to switch to the secondary targets, in his own case a railway siding farther south. Once there, Stockdale's Skyhawk was suddenly caught in flak; the plane started pitching wildly, and Stockdale was forced to pull the ejection handle. He landed in the middle of a village, with a broken shoulder and a shattered knee which ruled out any escape attempts. The inhabitants beat him up before the local authorities arrived.

With Stockdale's capture began one of the most harrowing ordeals of the Vietnam war; together with his wife he now tells this story in their new book, *In Love and War*. Stockdale was in possession of potentially damaging information. The year before he had been an eyewitness to the so-called "second" Tonkin Gulf incident, in which the destroyers *Maddox* and *Turner Joy* had reported attacks by North Vietnamese torpedo boats, apparently a repetition of the assault on the *Maddox* two days earlier. In spite of intense efforts, this time Stockdale and his fellow pilots had been unable to detect any enemy vessels. In all likelihood, the reports were a case of spooked equipment and nervous operators; the weather that night had been particularly turbulent. If the North Vietnamese could "prove," through an admission by Stockdale, that the U.S. Congress had given Lyndon Johnson a free hand to widen the war on the basis of an incident that had never taken place, the propaganda rewards would be obvious.

At his arrival at Hanoi's Hoa Lo (Fiery Furnace) prison, Stockdale was thrown into an isolation cell and subjected to systematic torture, including the rope trick, a favorite among the Hanoi interrogators; here the circulation is stopped in the victim's arms, while his head is pressed down between his legs, producing near suffocation. But Stockdale was a difficult case. As the highest ranking U.S. prisoner, it was his duty to organize the resistance among the pilots. This might have seemed a hopeless task to a man in solitary, but Stockdale solved the problem by developing a sophisticated high-volume communications network based on wall-tappings and scraping noises, and using the same code as Koestler's Rubashov in *Darkness at Noon*. Even pieces of thread coded with knots were used. At the same time, in his sparse correspondence with his wife, he smuggled out messages about prison conditions, verified the names of new prisoners (the North Vietnamese refused to make them public), suggested targets for bombings, and so forth.

STOCKDALE's main priority was to prevent the North Vietnamese from using American airmen for propaganda purposes, such as public denunciations of U.S. foreign policy or participation in such work programs as that designed to show prisoners helping in clearing up after air raids. Unity was therefore crucial. But simply to instruct the men to follow the American Fighting Man's Code of Conduct, which is almost as open to interpretation as the Constitution, would

HENRIK BERING-JENSEN *is a Danish critic and journalist currently living in the United States.*

THE LAST ARAB JEWS

The Communities of Jerba, Tunisia

by Abraham L. Udovitch, Princeton University and Lucette Valensi, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales

In this beautifully descriptive and sensitively written book, the authors look at the disappearance of the once numerous and vital Jewish communities of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and report on the only two remaining communities isolated on the island of Jerba. **The Last Arab Jews** portrays the life and history of these two Jerban Jewish villages—and explores the paradoxes of their community.

1984, 271 pp. (3-7186-0135-4) $36.00

To order, send check or credit card information to:

Harwood Academic Publishers

Marketing Department; 50 West 23 Street New York, NY 10010

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JUDAISM

Robert Gordis, Editor

. . . dedicated to the exploration and discussion of the religious, ethical and philosophical content of Judaism and its bearing on the problems of modern society.

Fall '84 Issue

"JEWISH SURVIVAL" AND ANTI-SEMITISM

Jakob J. Petuchowski

PORTRAIT OF GOD AS A YOUNG ARTIST: THE FLOOD REVISITED

Byron L. Sherwin

CLIMATE AND HEALTH: CLASSICAL AND TALMUDIC PERSPECTIVES

Stephen Newmyer

THE POLEMIC ON MIRACLES

Ruth Birnbaum

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF ABRAM THE DOUBTER

Haim Chertok

JUDAISM Quarterly is published by the American Jewish Congress
15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028

Annual Subscription $12.00 (Foreign $13.00)

JUDAISM — 15 East 84th St., New York, N.Y. 10028
I enclose $12 ($13) for an annual subscription to JUDAISM starting with the next issue

Name _____

Address _____

City and State _____ Zip _____

---

have been irresponsible. It was necessary to spell out the Code's application to the specific conditions in Hanoi, and to issue detailed resistance orders. That way, the men knew exactly what they were required to take torture for and why.

All this was of course occurring while American "fact-finders" were descending upon Hanoi singing the praises of the regime. As an especially cruel and evil punishment, the authorities of Hoa Lo arranged readings over the loudspeaker of Harrison Salisbury's New York *Times* articles. American sympathizers also helped the North Vietnamese evaluate prisoners' confessions. In one case it cost an airman months in leg irons when it was learned through these means that he had made fools of his captors by supplying the names Clark Kent and Ben Casey as examples of fellow pilots who had resigned in protest against the war. (There were no such cases.)

IT QUICKLY became clear to Stockdale that the standard recommendations for POW behavior, based on the notion of remaining calm and dignified, would be of limited value in Hanoi. Something more radical was called for. The psychiatrist/patient relationship, inherent in Communist "reeducation efforts," would have to be broken; the constant admonitions to be rational and to cooperate would have to be rejected. Like Dostoevsky's "underground man," Stockdale rebelled against the tyranny of reason. His urge for autonomy manifested itself in "irrational" acts such as disfiguring himself with a razor and hammering his eyelids shut before a planned public session, and once slashing his wrist. By creating an unstable personality, by learning to be unreasonable, he gained a measure of protection. It is hard to hurt a man who seems hell-bent on hurting himself.

Throughout his ordeal, Stockdale's faith and his philosophical training helped him raise himself from being a blind and crippled creature living in his own excrement. Curiously, he passes lightly over the philosophical side, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from other sources we know that it was the Stoic philosopher Epictetus who provided the greatest inspiration. In moments of weakness, advice like the following would flash through Stockdale's mind: "If some person delivered up your body to a passer-by you would certainly be angry. Do you feel no shame in delivering up your own mind to be reviled, disconcerted, and confounded?" Or when faced with temptation: "Whoever would be free, let him wish nothing which depends on others, else he must necessarily be a slave." More generally, the art of survival consisted in "getting his head out of the box" to ward off claustrophobia, for example by retracing in his mind the route to his old grade school, or by seeking refuge in the timeless world of mathematics. (Later, as president of the Naval War College, he tried to have some of his ideas incorporated in the curriculum.)

BACK home, Stockdale's wife was becoming increasingly impatient with the Johnson administration's handling of the prisoner question. The North Vietnamese, insisting that the war had not been officially declared, did not feel bound to comply with the Geneva Convention, even though this explicitly covers *any* armed conflict between the signatories. But Secretary of State Dean Rusk preferred not to press the matter, as too much interest in the prisoners might tempt the Communists to use them as hostages to gain concessions. (Repeatedly Hanoi had threatened the prisoners with war-crimes trials.)

Mrs. Stockdale, however, remained convinced of the error of this "keep quiet" policy in a conflict where so much depended on public perceptions. Accordingly, she founded the League of Wives of American Prisoners of War in order to increase public awareness of the prisoners' plight; her effort later mushroomed into a national organization of POW relatives. This initiative eventually led to a change of policy when the Nixon administration came into office. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird publicly denounced North Vietnam's treatment of prisoners for the first time in May 1969. Greater media attention and, later, the resumption of the bombing led to a slight improvement in the prisoners' conditions.

AFTER seven-and-one-half years of imprisonment, of which the greater part was spent in solitary, Stockdale found himself on the second plane out of Hanoi on February 12, 1973. He never gave up his secret to the North Vietnamese. He was later promoted to Rear Admiral and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1976. The readjustment to peace has been long and painful; it was estimated that it would take as many years as he had been incarcerated, and the estimate has proved correct.

Reading his book, one notes the bitterness at the way the war was

"A much-needed examination of the dangers of the thoughtless proliferation of rights."
—THOMAS SOWELL, Hoover Institution

Disabling America
The "Rights Industry" in Our Time
RICHARD E. MORGAN

It is the challenging thesis of this controversial book that during the last two decades a "rights industry"—consisting of interest group advocates, activist lawyers, law professors, and publicists—has, in effect, become "unhinged." They had expanded, redefined, and manipulated the law of civil rights in order to create new rights against the claims of society, even when these ignored or distorted America's constitutional tradition. As a result, major American institutions, both governmental and private, have become seriously disabled.
"An original and provocative contribution. This is a book that is likely to have an impact that is wide and lasting. *Disabling America* is a magnificent indictment of one of the major political problems of the 20th century—the rise of constitutionalism bereft of the constitution."
—GARY L. McDOWELL, Tulane University $16.95

"A scholarly, far-ranging, and thoughtful book."
—ERNEST GELLNER, *The New Republic*

In the Path of God
Islam and Political Power
DANIEL PIPES

In recent years, Islam has again become a force to be reckoned with in world affairs. What has caused this resurgence? And what are its likely consequences? In the first comprehensive study of Islam and its extraordinary role in world politics, Daniel Pipes probes the roots and likely results of today's Islamic revival. Shattering misconceptions with a careful explanation of Islamic beliefs, tracing the troubled history of relations between the Islamic world and the West, he provides important insights into a vital geopolitical issue. "Readable and comprehensive. Daniel Pipes has searched the depths of specialist reading on behalf of the general reader to produce a reliable guide for the perplexed."—MARTIN KRAMER, *The American Spectator*
"A scholarly attempt to explain what is going on in that little-known, volatile and very important part of the world—and to define the role that religion plays in it . . . well worth reading."—RONALD TAGGIASCO, *Business Week* $22.50

Basic Books, Inc.
10 East 53rd St.
New York, NY 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fought, a bitterness shared by many officers of Stockdale's generation who were appalled by the timid and half-hearted military effort, the unwillingness to recognize Hanoi rather than the Vietcong as the real enemy, the constant interference by Washington with the authority of local commanders, and the belief that complex diplomatic signals could be transmitted by military restraint. Thus pilots and planes were risked on meaningless targets while forced to pass by targets that were vital to the North Vietnamese war effort. Stockdale still remembers the mocking Soviet sailors waving from ships bound for Haiphong. Finally, there is deep anger over the way the North Vietnamese were able to exploit the Western media.

Stockdale's prison experience ultimately puts him beyond the grasp of most of his readers. One can only salute a very brave man, and hope that the U.S. never again engages in a war that it does not intend to win.

A Sacred Canopy?

THE NAKED PUBLIC SQUARE: RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA. BY RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS. *Eerdmans. 280 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by JAMES NUECHTERLEIN

MOST Americans were taken by surprise when the 1984 presidential election threatened for a time to degenerate into a war of religion. The majority of them have come to think of America as a secular society (no matter how religious they might themselves be), and they were not prepared for the conflicts that erupted over specific issues such as abortion and school prayer or over the larger question of the role of religion in American public life. A combination of fear and prudence led both presidential candidates to back off from the problem shortly after it arose, and in the end the election did not hinge on religious issues (although many analysts have attributed the heavy Jewish vote for Mondale to fears associated with the rise of the religious New Right).

The election is now behind us, but there is every indication that the religious question will be around to bedevil us for some time to come. It has been sidestepped rather than settled. Richard John Neuhaus's book offers a useful introduction to the extraordinary complexities and ambiguities that surround the issue, and if it leaves the essential problems unresolved, it nonetheless establishes a subtle and nuanced base for further debate.

Neuhaus has the right credentials to presume to instruct us on "religion and democracy in America." Before assuming his present position as director of the Center on Religion and Society in New York, he was a Lutheran parish pastor in Brooklyn, an antiwar activist and participant in Democratic-party politics during the Vietnam era, an editor of *Worldview* and *Lutheran Forum* (he retains the latter association), and the author of an extensive list of books and articles on religion and public affairs. His political associations have been as varied as his experience: he began his involvement in public life on the Left, but over the years he has come to occupy a place on the political spectrum somewhere in the neoliberal/neoconservative vicinity. Whatever his ideological preferences, Neuhaus has always subordinated them to his religious beliefs and commitments. He defines himself as a pastor and theologian first, and his politics derives from his theology, not the other way around.

Neuhaus begins his analysis in *The Naked Public Square* with the same phenomenon that has brought the religious issue to general public attention and concern—the emergence of the religious New Right. He is no partisan of the politicized Christian conservatives, but he is sympathetic to some of their concerns. (He is also careful to point out that not all or even most Protestant evangelicals and fundamentalists have become political activists; most of them continue to view politics as having only marginal significance in their own lives or in the larger scheme of things.) The moral majoritarians are wrong, Neuhaus suggests, to dream of a Christian America, but they are right to object to the ideology of the naked public square, the secularist dogma that would exclude religion and religiously grounded values from the public arena.

America is not a secular society, Neuhaus insists, and only in relatively recent times has it come to be thought of that way. Most Americans explicitly identify themselves as believers, and 90 percent of them claim that the Judeo-Christian tradition is "somehow morally normative" for public and private life alike. Politics, Neuhaus says, is largely a function of culture, and religion is at the heart of culture. One thing that the American religious Left and Right have come to agree on is that religion cannot be restricted to purely personal concerns; it has public—and therefore political—implications. It is neither reasonable nor legitimate, Neuhaus concludes, for Americans to be told they can only enter the public arena if they agree to check their deepest beliefs at the door.

Neuhaus is not unaware of the dangers of intermixing religion and politics. Fanaticism and triumphalism must be resisted, he emphasizes, and in a pluralist society like ours people of minority religions—or no religion at all—need to have ironclad assurances that their views and values will be respected by the religious majority. (Neuhaus expresses particular concern for Jewish sensitivities on this point; he understands fully the fear and indignation that talk of a Christian America arouses.) "Democratic diversity," he says, has to be carefully protected. The sense of transcendent purpose that Neuhaus wants to reestablish at the heart of the American experiment must never become, he tells us, an instrument of closure or coercion. One can believe in moral ultimacies, in his view, and still insist on tolerance and compromise as the heart of pluralist democracy. Transcendent purpose can at best be only imperfectly discerned, and all apprehensions of ultimate reality should be marked by provision-

JAMES NUECHTERLEIN *teaches political philosophy at Valparaiso University, where he is also editor of* The Cresset.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ality and modesty. The "sacred canopy" of Judeo-Christian biblical religion Neuhaus would erect over American society can serve, he argues, to check the pretensions of the churches as well as the state.

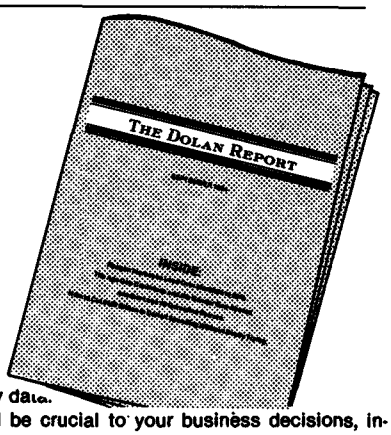
Neuhaus also insists that expressions of religious conviction in the public arena must be accessible to nonreligious perspectives and accountable to public reason. It is not legitimate, he suggests, for those who are religious to expect to have their views accepted in the public sphere on the ground of special revelation or private understanding. Religious certainties must be translatable into public arguments.

But whatever the qualifications, Neuhaus remains convinced that the construction of a workable public philosophy requires grounding in religious values. The public square, emptied of religious faith, will not remain naked. Transcendence abhors a vacuum, Neuhaus argues; man is a meaning-seeking animal, and in the absence of religious meaning other absolutisms will flood in. Ersatz political substitutes will take the place of religion, and those substitutes—exemplified in our century by Hitler, Stalin, and Mao—might make us think twice about the presumed evils of religious conviction. Transcendent judgment relativizes all political presumptions, and democratic principles of limited government and inviolable human rights perhaps find their safest anchor in the acknowledgment of the divine perspective and divine sanctions. In any case, politics must be related to morality, and in America, Neuhaus insists, "religion and morality are conjoined."

A religious perspective sufficient for our present needs, Neuhaus concedes, will not be easy to find. The moral majoritarians lack civility and restraint, while the mainstream Protestants often seem to have abdicated their theological responsibilities in favor of fashionable radicalisms and secularized (and fanciful) versions of liberation. The Protestant mainstream has further cut itself off from the culture-forming revitalization of democracy Neuhaus has in mind by its reflexive anti-Americanism. It has not, he argues, found the right balance of "prophecy and patriotism, love and criticism." The groups between the mainstream and the evangelicals—Catholics, Lutherans, Orthodox—may lack the vitality or the influence to legitimate America's democratic experiment. Whichever of these varied groups presumes to take the leadership in doing so, Neuhaus says, will have to accomplish its tasks on an ecumenical basis, one that includes "the secure establishment of Christianity's bond with living Judaism." On that indeterminate point (how, one wonders, will this good thing be achieved?), Neuhaus concludes his argument.

It is an argument worthy of sympathetic attention and, in many respects, admiration. This is a large-

You can't afford this.



At least all by yourself. Wouldn't you like to be able to afford a $40,000 or $50,000 national survey every month of the year? What if you could get the same amount of information for less than $30 per month?

That's just what your subscription to *The Dolan Report* will provide.

Presidential campaigns, political strategists, lobbyists, businessmen, journalists and others who want to know what Americans are really thinking all have a great need for accurate, professional survey data.

The Dolan Report contains information that could be crucial to your business decisions, investments, and the timing of your lobbying efforts—not to mention vital public opinions concerning the most pertinent issues.

The White House reads it. So do the heads of industry and leading Democrats. Now you can have first rate political intelligence on your desk every month—fresh, accurate and ready to help you make key decisions.

Interested? It's not cheap, but few professional tools are. A one year subscription to *The Dolan Report* costs $350 for twelve issues—and access to over $400,000 worth of political intelligence. As a subscriber, you can also have your own personal questions inserted into the survey at a special discount rate.

If you had been reading *The Dolan Report,* you'd know about:

—THE AGE GAP—*The Dolan Report* was the first to cover the surge for Reagan among young voters.

—THE REAGAN MANDATE—Does the massive victory call for a new conservative agenda?

—A NATIONAL POLITICAL REALIGNMENT—Are we witnessing a true American realignment?

Here's what three prominent subscribers have to say about *The Dolan Report:*

"The Dolan Report is truly fantastic!"
Arthur B. Laffer
Economist

"I can't do without it."
Richard Viguerie
Conservative Direct Mail
Consultant

"This issue of your publication offered great insight into the often unexplored areas that significantly affect our national political campaigns."
Congressman Carroll Hubbard
1st District, Kentucky

THE DOLAN REPORT

call for information
703/549-1572

108 North Alfred Street, Alexandria, Va 22314

I want all the quality political intelligence I can get—every month. Enclosed is my payment of $350 for my subscription.

☐ **Enclosed is my check for $350**
☐ **MasterCard** ☐ **Visa #** _____ **exp. date** _____
☐ **I would like to know more about The Dolan Report**

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

minded book, and its sophistication and intelligence advance our understanding of the religion/politics issue far beyond the confusions and incomprehensions that dominate most discussions of the subject. Neuhaus understands, as most of our politicians and editorialists apparently do not, that the topic is not exhausted once one has invoked the First Amendment and come out in favor of toleration. But his analyses and prescriptions, plausible as they are, are not without problems of their own.

What, to begin with, does it mean to say that America is a religious society? Most Americans, it is true, hold to at least some minimal religious conviction and many of them go considerably beyond that. But it remains to be shown that their religious beliefs make serious substantive differences in their attitudes or behavior in the public arena. On certain specific issues, of course—abortion, school prayer, public aid to religious schools—we can see direct patterns of influence. But Neuhaus has more general configurations of belief in mind when he speaks of establishing religious legitimation for America's democratic proposition. Yet one suspects that most Americans most of the time keep their religious and political views in separate compartments. They require of their political beliefs only that they not be directly contradicted by their religious and moral values. That for them is legitimation enough, and their conduct in the public world is otherwise unaffected by their religious convictions. For most people, religion's effects are seen directly in their beliefs about transcendent meaning and in certain ways that they go about living their daily lives. Politics is kept at a further remove, and its legitimacy does not depend on its being clothed with sacred symbols or understandings.

Some of the most helpful analyses of American society in recent years have emphasized the tripartite division of the society into political, economic, and moral-cultural realms. The distinctions among those realms are not absolute, of course, but they remain useful for both analytic and normative reasons. Neuhaus objects to the exclusion of "religion and religiously grounded values" from the public square. But if Americans' religiously grounded political beliefs are as generalized and attenuated as suggested above, then perhaps they are not excluded after all, except among a relatively insignificant group of militant secularists. And in a pluralistic society there is good reason to resist the direct importation of religion itself into public life. Thus there can be no legitimate opposition to Catholics opposing abortion because it conflicts with their religious/moral beliefs, but we would rightly object if they expected non-Catholics to accept their arguments on the basis of Church dogma. As Neuhaus himself would insist, they must make their arguments in the public square accessible to public discourse.

THERE are other problems with Neuhaus's Judeo-Christian sacred canopy. Michael Novak, in an argument Neuhaus notes but rejects, has said that a genuinely pluralistic society by intention keeps at its spiritual core an empty shrine. Its emptiness, Novak suggests, represents the virtually infinite number of directions from which free people approach transcendence. Novak's formulation suggests the possibility of many canopies for many persuasions: "Believer and unbeliever, selfless and selfish, frightened and bold, naive and jaded, all participate in an order whose *center* is not socially imposed." If there is an overarching canopy, it is the commitment to a spirit of cooperation and mutuality, within which we can achieve not unitary vision but "unity in practice, diversity in belief."

Novak's approach helps us avoid certain difficulties in Neuhaus's more restrictive formulation. If America's sacred canopy must be Judeo-Christian in content, what does this suggest for those outside that category? Are they not then excluded by definition from the social consensus binding society together? And Neuhaus's formulation is problematic even within its own terms: Jews and Christians, as Neuhaus well knows, have quite different conceptions of history's meaning and destiny, and the term "Judeo-Christian" is a convention that implies far more in the way of a common world view than is in fact the case. Neuhaus understands that, but in the interests of his larger argument he tends to obscure it.

One offers these reservations hesitantly. Anyone who has given any thought at all to the problem of religion and society in America knows how hopelessly tangled and complex the issues embedded there are, and Neuhaus has done us all an invaluable service by starting to sort them out and arrange them in coherent order. Even where we do not finally agree with him, we will have to build on him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOW TO TALK TO TEENAGERS ABOUT DRINKING AND DRIVING.

KEEPING OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

Teenagers can get into a lot of trouble with alcohol. Even teenagers who don't drink. Often they aren't aware of the facts.

A new view of the statistics shows where part of the problem lies, and can lead to a better communication between adults and teenagers.

Teenagers are in the high-risk group. People between the ages of 16 and 24 represent only 20 percent of the licensed drivers of our country. But that same group is involved in 42 percent of all the alcohol-related fatal crashes. When you think about that, two tragic things are revealed:

First, not all teenagers killed in such accidents are themselves drunk at the time. Often they have had nothing to drink at all, but are passengers in cars driven by teenagers who have been drinking.

Second, teenagers are often on the roads late at night, especially on weekends, when most crashes involving alcohol occur. They are targets for cars driven by people who have had too much to drink.

Some facts about alcohol you might want to discuss with teenagers are often surprising to adults:

- One can of beer, as well as one eight-ounce glass of wine, and one 1½-ounce drink of 86-proof liquor are all equally intoxicating. The risk is the same regardless of what you've been drinking.
- The legal definition of intoxication is based on "Blood Alcohol Concentration" or "BAC." If you have a BAC of .10, you are legally drunk in most states. But for drivers or drinkers who are less experienced, a BAC of .05, or sometimes lower, can be dangerous.
- Even relatively low levels of alcohol can reduce your tolerance to injury, increasing the danger in an accident.

Arm your teenagers with the facts and give them time to reflect on them.

If expected to show good judgment, teenagers are more likely to live up to it.

Please discuss the problem of drinking and driving with your teenagers now, and if you think this advertisement will help, ask them to read it.

And keep in mind, that the best way to teach young people—as they may tell you—is by example.

The people of General Motors care, and urge teenagers, and their parents, to give serious thought to the dangers of drinking and driving. It's something we all can do.

This advertisement is part of our continuing effort to give customers useful information about their cars and trucks and the company that builds them.

GM
MARK OF EXCELLENCE

Chevrolet • Pontiac
Oldsmobile • Buick
Cadillac • GMC Truck

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Show her the rewards of full economic recovery.

De Beers

A quality diamond of a carat or more.

Quality. It's as important in diamonds as in anything else you own. It's especially important in diamonds of a carat or more.

Extraordinary. One of nature's most perfect gifts is also the hardest natural gemstone known to man. It's spectacular. Impressive. And rare.

In order to understand quality in diamonds, one must understand the 4C's: Cut, Color, Clarity and Carat-weight. It is the 4© characteristics that determine the value of a diamond.

Your jeweler is the expert where diamonds are concerned. He can show you diamonds of a carat or more of such exceptional quality as to please even the most discriminating tastes. Give her the ultimate. A quality diamond of a carat or more.

A diamond is forever.

The necklace shown features a quality diamond of 3.06 carats.
Since this isn't the kind of purchase you make every day, we've prepared an informative brochure to help you make the right decision. For your copy, send $2.00 to Diamond Information Center, Dept. C, 1345 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY 10105.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED